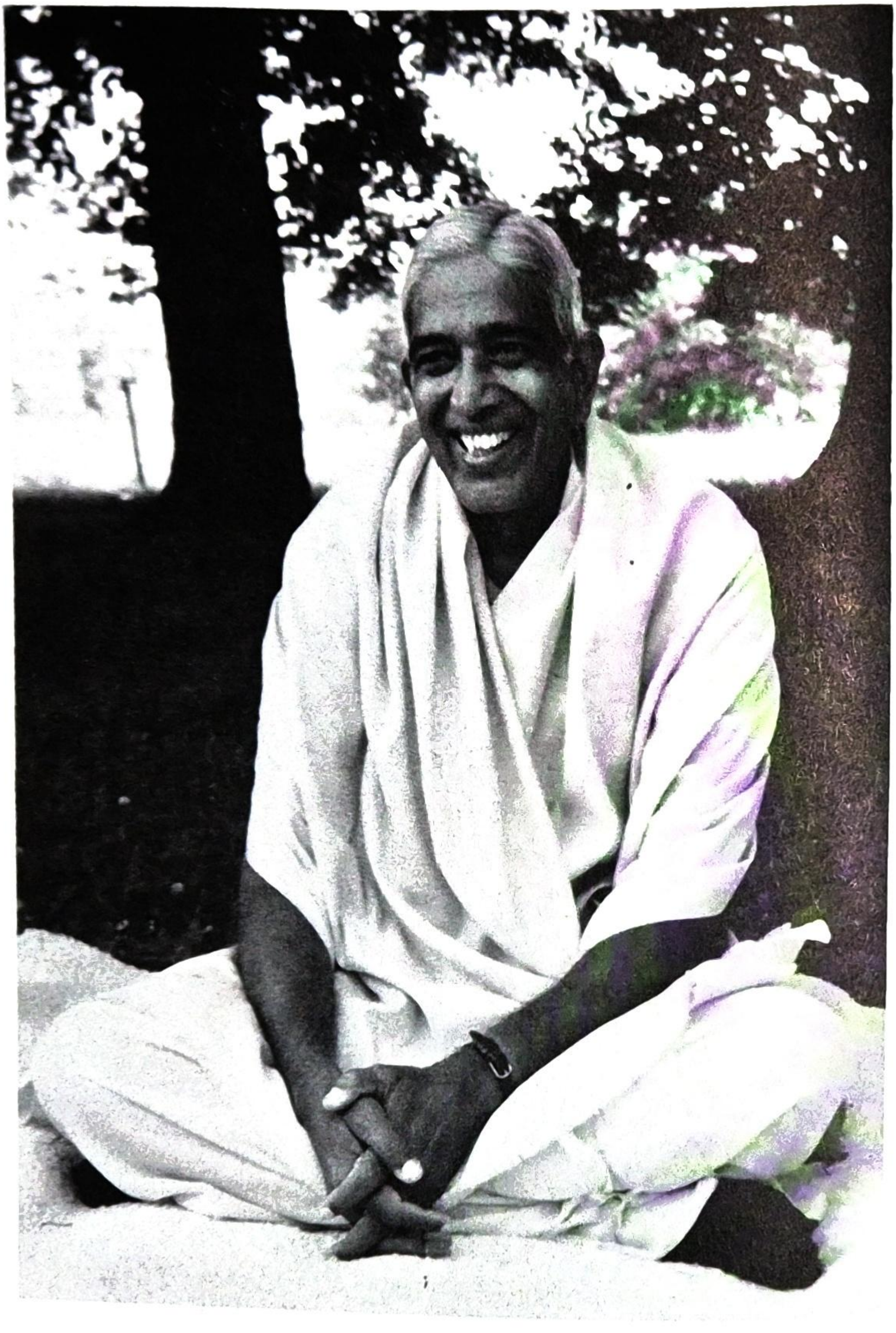
HEART TO HEART

VOLUME III

P. RAJAGOPALACHARI



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Heart to Heart

Talks from Seminars held in Europe and the USA in 1988

given by
Shri Parthasarathi Rajagopalachari

Volume III

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I

Europe

1

Public Talk

Toulon, France
June 15, 1988

I shall try to speak slowly for those who understand English. It is an easy subject and a difficult subject, and you must permit me to tell the truth as I have been taught by my Master Shri Ram Chandraji Maharaj whose photograph you see here. Of course it is Eastern teaching from the Far East, from the Middle East, from India. So naturally there will be problems of acceptance, problems of understanding, perhaps. But I am sure you have all come here with an open mind and, more important, an open heart. And also the times are now changing, people are more open to acceptance of what we used to call foreign ideas.

I would like to start with a little autobiographical touch to this talk just to give you a part of the humour of the situation, because my first contact with Indian philosophy, yogic philosophy, psychology was through the West. I did not have the opportunity to learn Sanskrit, without which direct access to the texts of the Indian yogis is impossible. So I came to it through, for instance, Max Mueller of Germany, some English authors, some Sufi writings by French people even, your own Pere Teilhard de Chardin. And I was very considerably amused, and annoyed too, that I had to learn the truth about my country, my philosophy, my existence, through foreign languages, through foreign authors. All because I did not know the language in which they were written.

I am saying this only to highlight the importance of language. Today I am unhappy that I cannot speak to you in your French language. I am, as you say in French, "*Je suis désolé*," but I do not know enough to speak about it. And sometimes even English is not enough because there are many words in Sanskrit which you cannot translate into any other language. I have found that even a simple word like *atma* for instance has no exact translation into the English language. Some call it the spirit, some call it the soul. So these problems come when we try to learn one culture through another language and there are occasions, there are situations, there are texts which are impossible to understand without knowing that language.

For instance there is the story of a famous Englishman who was a judge of the Calcutta High Court in the British days, in the old British regime. He became interested in what is called the serpent power, the *kundalini*, things like that. He wanted to learn Sanskrit. And unfortunately in my country, in India in those days the white people, the Europeans, used to be considered as some sort of lesser class of human beings. The Brahmins had control over the Sanskrit teaching and they refused to teach him Sanskrit. That was the superstition, the hypocrisy of those days, all because Sanskrit was supposed to be a divine language. So people who wanted to learn could not learn, and people like me who did not know the language could not learn also. And this is not peculiar only to the Hindu culture or the Indian tradition, it is the same with the Hebrew tradition. It is the same with the Arabic tradition. It is the same with all traditions which are embedded in their native languages. That particular judge used to go with his face veiled like the Moslem women wear. His face was covered and he was carried in a coach in secret to the person who used to teach him Sanskrit.

So I am just trying to tell you how difficult it is to learn things, not only for the foreigner, but for the local man like myself. And when I started reading these things through the English language, I discovered to my horror that I had misunderstood many things because the English people had misunderstood what they had learnt and also the Germans.

Max Mueller is a great scholar. He has written a set of books about this much, [gestures with hand] sixty-four volumes called *The Great Books of the East*. And just to give you an example, there is a Vedic mantra where again and again there is a refrain, where a soul in ecstasy, perhaps a devotee of the Lord, perhaps a practitioner of yoga, in that ecstasy he keeps saying, "To which God shall I give thanks? Which God shall I worship?" Now this has been misunderstood by most of the people from abroad. And they said the Indians do not know who their God is because they are asking this question, "Whom shall I worship? To whom shall I give thanks?" It is a *paean* of ecstasy, you see, for one who sees God everywhere, who sees God in everything. And it is like, you know, suppose you are all here, you are all happy and I ask you, "Shall I thank you or you or you? To whom shall I render thanks for coming here and listening to this talk?"

So this was an eye-opener to me that I must either learn the language of these sacred ancient texts, or I should find a man who could teach it to me without the barrier of a language. And I am happy to say that after many years of struggling, heart-breaking years of suffering, toil, frustration, where at one stage, I almost said, "The whole thing is unnecessary. It is a waste of time." At that time I was happy. I was fortunate enough to come across my Master, Shri Ram Chandraji. Now whether it is chance or destiny, well, it does not matter. It is a minor point of detail. The important thing is I found him. He taught me in a way in which no language was involved, no Sanskrit, no Hindi, nothing. And it is a wonderful thing that one can learn without speaking. One can learn without hearing. That may be the genius of the disciple, you may say, but it is the greater genius of the teacher that he can teach without ever having to speak to you. So that was the greatness of my Master. He was born in the end of the last century (1899) and as education is understood, he had very little education. He had passed half way through school and he himself used to say humourously, laughing at himself, that it was a blessing in disguise. And I could understand this statement instantly because having been, you know, a slave of language and a slave of the intellect, having had some contact with Europe in my early years, I had tended to give undue importance to language, rationality, intellect, understanding.

Now, please do not get angry with this statement because especially in France it is tactless to speak like this, where you have a vast tradition of intellectual learning, of philosophy. I assure you I am very proud of that tradition, because I have learnt quite a lot of what I know from the great ones of this country, France. I only mention one name, Pere Teilhard de Chardin because I met him, or rather I came to him, I came across his works, through a subject which I myself studied in school, geology — paleontology specifically. And he fascinated me because he was a priest. He was a paleontologist exposed to a long sojourn in a far Eastern country, China. I think he lived there for nearly forty years. But these are not the important things. The most important thing that we find in his life, in his writings, is the conflict of rationality as embodied in science and rationality as embodied in religion, specifically the Catholic religion. It would be carrying coals to Newcastle to tell you the story of his life, but it is a sad fact that in his lifetime none of his works were published because he dared to say, based on geology and paleontology, that the world was created millennia ago, and not just in 4,004 BC or something like that as the Church claimed.

Of course, that is not an isolated incident. We had the earlier instances of Galileo in Italy, and of Kepler, I mean, any number of people who had to study science and had to preach a faith, or practise a faith, had this problem of existence. And it has always been a problem even in my country, in India. It is no exception to this that the two fields of religion and the intellectual knowledge or rationality are always clashing. In fact, in India it has been much worse. We never crucified anybody. We never burnt anybody at the stake, but when a man went abroad, he crossed the seas and he came back. He then had to undergo certain ritual purifications in the Hindu tradition which I consider just as bad. Because whether you crucify a man's body or whether you crucify a man's soul, I do not know which is more painful. I think the soul is much more important. And I have this on very specific authority of people who have been crucified, who have been burnt, who have been murdered because they preferred their bodies to be crucified and not their souls.

In Christianity, you know, Christ was tempted by the Devil and you have that famous statement, "What shall a man profit if he gain the whole world but lose his soul?" So in a sense, it is good that religious persecution has created these great prophets, these great saints, these great martyrs. Because for those who wish to know and those who wish to understand, they can see from their lives that when there is a conflict, when there is, shall we say, a fight between the interests of the soul and the interests of the body, the body has to be sacrificed.

Now those are extreme situations. We do not have a Jesus Christ every day. But it shows to what extent we have got to be prepared to sacrifice if we wish to achieve what they achieved. And the degree of compassion that we must have, reflected in that famous cry of Christ from the cross, perhaps his last cry, I do not know, "Father forgive them, for they know not what they do." It is a willingness to sacrifice his life and also to protect the life of those who have persecuted him, who have sacrificed him. And that comes not by intellect and learning, not by understanding, but it is a quality of the heart.

Now, this is the great lesson that all these martyrs teach us. None of these great people had any university education. No country in which they were born can ever raise the claim that they were rationalists. In fact most of them had less than average education as we understand it today. And as I have already remarked, my Master was one of them.

In fact, if we read them carefully, all of them have had a suspicion of the intellect, suspicion of knowledge, and many of these great sons of this world have expressed this. For instance, one of the greatest sons of India, Swami Vivekananda, has said specifically, "The intellect can take you so far, but no further. And when you come to that point you have to respectfully bid the intellect goodbye." To quote from science, Einstein has said the same thing. He said that even in science, in scientific research, in speculative philosophies, you come to a point where, try as you may, you cannot go further, and you know that is the barrier of God, the boundary of God.

So it is not as if only the mystics have said it. The scientists, the great scientists, have also said it. People have gone out into the macro-universe, studying worlds, galaxies and they come to the limit of knowledge, limit of understanding. People have gone into the micro-universe, the sub-atomic, the sub-nuclear worlds, the sub-particular worlds and they face the same limits there. You see, that the limits are very wide does not deny the fact that there are very tangible, perceptible, felt limits to knowledge. Nor can we even say that because the limits are being extended that one day we will come to a situation where there is no limit. And it is a well-known statement of particularly astronomy, astrophysics, thanks again to Albert Einstein, that what we can see of the physical universe is very little. In fact, the state of knowledge is so elementary that we cannot know what we are really seeing of the total, because there is no estimate to the size of the universe. Because anything which is going beyond the velocity of light, you do not know where it is, why it is, how it is. So what is the point of a science, in a very well-known, well researched field of knowledge, where you do not even know how much percent of total knowledge you know today?

Now that is as far as science is concerned. Let us come to religion. Whether religion has known the limits of what they call infinity is the next question. Because you know the broad divisions of religious knowledge, that religions seek God outside somewhere in some heaven far away. And being human we invest that God with human qualities. He tempts us. He punishes us, all sorts of, you know, human tendencies. Or, if we wish to be brave, we make Him something very big, very tall with a hundred hands and ten heads like we do in India, trying to show unlimited power by unlimited number of hands and feet.

My Master first taught me one really very important piece of knowledge, a fact. That the original founders of these great religions, whether it is a Buddha or a Christ or a Krishna, or the Prophet Mohammed, they must have seen something of that Reality. Therefore they were able to speak about it, not in terms which we can understand but yet to say something about what they have seen.

Now this is a very important thing to understand, as my Master pointed out to me, because he said, "When even the founder who has had a personal vision of the Ultimate Deity itself, he cannot speak of it except in the most superficial terms, how are the founders of that religion in the shape of churches, temples, mosques, who have not had this direct perception of the Ultimate, how can they ever teach us anything about God? More important, how can they ever show us God?"

Therefore, if you see the occult traditions, the secret traditions of the East, the West, the Middle East, any place, it is more right to call it the tradition of mysticism. There is a very famous statement, "He who knows cannot speak. He who speaks does not know." Does it mean that we cannot know about it just because somebody has said so? My Master said, "Not at all." He said, "If your search is through the intellect, through the way of knowledge, you can search for a hundred lives and you are not going to find it." Because God cannot be a subject of knowledge *per se*.

This is well-known in all the mystic philosophies. But unfortunately, when we are attached to religions and religious practices and religious rituals and religious worship, we forget this. I think we forget it willingly and knowingly too. I beg your pardon for making that statement but it is my personal experience. Because a religion is a very convenient thing. You know, once a week, or once in fifteen days you go to your temple or your church, offer a perfunctory prayer, make a confession which we do not mean, which is not from the heart, put some money in the plate, or in the *hundi* as we call it in India, and our duty for that week or for that fortnight is done. And we can conveniently leave God in his church or his temple, come back home, and pursue our lives without change.

So religion is a very convenient thing, you see, because we are able to get rid of our periodical accumulations of whatever we feel, guilt, sin, whatever it is, you see, and come back happy without the responsibility for changing ourselves.

Now this is impossible in a way which follows the heart, which is spirituality, which is mysticism, because the first law of spirituality says, "My son, there is nobody to punish you or reward you, except yourself. If there is a God and you seek Him, He is inside you not somewhere in heaven." Even in the Christian tradition it is there, you see. It is there in all traditions. "Seek within." And now when you seek Him inside yourself, He is worse than any God of punishment that you can dream of in religion. By personal experience I can tell you He is a million times worse than any God of punishment that you can create for a religion, because it is easy to tell lies, it is easy to prevaricate. It is easy to make promises which we do not mean. When you see a God outside yourself in the form of a figure or a cross or whatever it is, a symbol. But when He is inside you and knows you inside out, as we say in English, to try to lie to Him is lying to yourself. Now who is going to punish you? You are punishing yourself. Who is rewarding you? Also yourself.

So the onus, the responsibility, for development, is brought to within ourselves. It is not only a terrible responsibility but it is a frightening responsibility. Because now my inner voice tells me, "My friend, you have to change if you are to get His grace! If you are going on as you are going on, do not expect Him to be your *avocat* (advocate), for instance."

So you see, the spiritual way has been known through the history of human development. I mean, one can easily say that it must predate knowledge as we understand it. Knowledge, as you know it in the West, is hardly a thousand years old, maybe two thousands years old. How old are the Greek philosophers?

I mean, you can measure them in centuries. If you go to the East, well, it is still measurable, five centuries, ten centuries, a hundred centuries. It makes no difference, you see, because there have always been people before that who have talked about God, who have sung about God, who have created hymns and poetry about God which were not printed but, nevertheless, transmitted from age to age through word of mouth. And they were the seers, the visionaries, not the knowers of God.

Now at some point in the history of human development this hiatus between knowing and feeling has come and, unfortunately, spirituality and religion seem to have taken divergent routes. One the way of the intellect — philosophy. The other the way of the heart — spirituality, mysticism.

Now, I think that is enough of an introduction to this problem that we are facing today. I would now like to restrict my further talk to my Master and to what he taught me. As I said, the first lesson that he taught me is, "God cannot be known, but God can be experienced." Because, when you seek to know something, there must be an object to be perceived. I think we are all agreed on that. So how to feel His presence? My Master said not by going out of yourself. Because outside you, you have objects, they may be worshipable, they may be adorable in human form or otherwise because, you know, even a girl whom you love is adorable. Sometimes we think they are goddesses too. But the goddesses we are talking of are different, the ultimate unit of creation, what the Eastern philosophy talks of as nothing in itself but from which everything comes.

This was a point which was difficult for me to understand. How can nothing give you something? How can that which has no power in itself give you the immense power of the universe? How can that Ultimate which has no knowledge yet bring forth from itself all knowledge?

My Master said, "It is possible. It has been done. It will continue to be done, too." And he gave me a simple example, the zero of mathematics. One is one. Put a zero by its side, it is multiplied by ten. It is nothing yet it gives value to something. Now for me this was sufficient because, you know, for understanding all that you need is like a little salt in the food, or a little touch of something. It reveals everything. So my mind was able to accept that it is possible that something can come from nothing.

So that was the first point in my search for spirituality. Then the next question was how to do it? Because before that I had been studying the philosophies, various philosophies of the world. I had been practicing hatha yoga, *pranayama*, *asanas*, and I had considerably damaged myself. In fact, I can say, had I continued with that yogic practice of hatha yoga, which is, after all, only a physical and a psychic exercise, there was the very distinct possibility that I would have become mad. Now this is not an exaggeration, it is something I have felt. I was going crazy.

Now it was at that moment that I came across my Master. And with one, shall we say, touch, of course it was not a physical touch, or a mental touch, but a spiritual touch, he was able to heal me and bring real sense into my head. Not the knowledge of the books and the sensibility of rationality, but a higher sensibility. I think it was Horatio who says, in one of his plays, "There are more things in heaven and earth than are dreamed of in your philosophy." And then when I asked him, "Master, what should I do?" he said, "It is very easy." That was a shocking thing for me to hear, that something for which many millions of people throughout the history of this world have been trying, struggling, fighting, have lost their lives in the search, can be so easy. I said, "Do you mean it?" Because here [showing the picture of Babuji], you see him in a very characteristically regal pose, you know, he looks like a king, but in his house he was a very small, weak individual, quite old. When I met him he was already sixty-five years old and not, by any means, capable of convincing a man like me suddenly.

Because as I told you, I had some contact with the West, the Western philosophy, the Western culture, the Western rationalism. In fact, once my Master humourously, laughingly said, "You are quite advanced in your Western corruption." He said, "Your mind has been corrupted by Western thought, Western philosophies." Not because they have taught something wrong, or something ignoble, or something undivine, but according to my Master they committed one tragic mistake; making God appear something very difficult to achieve, when it is the most simple.

That was his complaint about western teaching, about the flight of their thoughts, about the vastness of their research, about the beauty of their philosophy. There is no doubt about the depth of their philosophy and, most importantly, the mental courage with which they attack subjects. He said, "All this is admirable. We in India have nothing to parallel this achievement of the West. One cannot match their analytical strength, their analytical acumen. One cannot match their profundity in thinking, nor can we ever match the vastness of the subjects which they have studied, the originality of their research, their ability to create instruments with which to do that research. All this cannot be questioned." The contribution of the West, of the Occident to intellectual knowledge, to advancement of science, to the perfection of technology can never be questioned.

Then I said, "My Master, what are you talking about corruption of the West?" He then told me this quotation of

Christ which I told you first, his generosity when he said, "Father forgive them for they know not what they do." Here is that civilization which is crucifying one of its own sons, perhaps the greatest son it ever had, out of bigotry, superstition, ignorance because that man claimed that he was the son of God. See, do you understand what an enormous crime humanity committed against itself? Because Christians may arrogantly think that Christ belongs only to Christianity, but no great son of this world can ever be contained within a religion, or within a nationality, or within a geography. He belongs to all humanity. And, therefore, today Hindus have as much a right to criticize and to condemn a vulgar, stupid, ignorant murder of one of the greatest sons this world has produced.

So my Master said, "This is the crime of the West. That while they give Nobel prizes to their scientists, their mathematicians, their geographers, what have they given to a Jesus Christ?" What did they do with, for instance, the Greek philosopher Socrates? He was given poison. And this question of, you know, the intellect, the rationality, opposing the inner claims to divinity of an individual has been running through humanity like a thread that is binding the pearls round your neck.

So my Master said, "This is something which fortunately some have been able to avoid." Rationality? Yes, it is very desirable. It is necessary. Research? Yes. Science, technology? Of course it is a must. And India has made a very great and a very tragic mistake in negating science and technology. And, therefore, a country which could perhaps be the greatest in this world is one of the poorest in this world. The situation was reversed, you see. The Indians went too far, too much to the extreme in condemning science, technology, rationality, and sitting idle under trees pretending to meditate, as if every individual could be a rishi, and blaming God for human miseries, human tendencies, human achievements. So my Master said, "The West made a mistake in abandoning God for science and technology. We have made an even bigger mistake by abandoning science and technology for an unknown God."

So if there is one thing that holds all of us together today, which even brings us here together today, you see, it is a recognition of these tragic mistakes. Always like a pendulum swinging to the extremes. And that was one of the greatest teachings of my Master. He said, "Life must have a balance, like a bird which flies on two wings." Every human being has the inner spiritual life, and the outer scientific or rational life, and neither should be neglected for the other, but equal attention be given to both. So this was his great teaching. Then I understood that his criticism was not really a criticism. He was only trying to bring into my mind, and many people like me who had what we thought was the advantage of a higher education in India, by giving me one single caution, a warning, you see, "Yes, it is necessary. But this is also necessary." [pointing to the heart]

Just like a man must eat and drink, he must also breathe. Now the physical food and the physical drink cannot possibly substitute for the air that we breathe. In fact it is a well-known thing that you can live without solid food for, I do not know, one hundred days, two hundred days, if necessary. You cannot live without water for more than a few days. And how long can you live without breathing? A few minutes, you see, no more. And then my Master said, "How long do you think you can live without God? Not at all." So you see, as the thing becomes subtler and subtler, our need for it becomes greater and greater. But today we are remembering the gross things, the material things, and forgetting the source of our existence, the source of our life itself, **my Self**. Because that which is within myself is my Self. So spirituality says, "When you look for God, you are looking really for the Self." *Majuscule* capital 'S'.

So this is the message of my Master, "Look inside, try to look for Him whom you think is God and eventually you will find Him as your Self." But do not make the tragic mistake of thinking that you, yourself, as you are today, is that Self which you will find when you are fully developed. He is there. Without Him you cannot exist, but there is a big, vast ocean of difference between you and Him now. You have to get rid of all the accumulations of what we call grossness, make your existence subtle, and then, one day, you will find that it was always **you** who was inside, nothing else. Therefore all the mystic paths have called it Self realisation. God realisation is nothing but Self realisation. And this truth we find emphasized in the Gita, one of the great texts of the Hindu culture that, "God exists in the heart of every created being, whether it is a fly, or a mosquito, or an animal, or a bird, or a human being, because nothing can exist without Him." And therefore it is no miracle, no mystery, that when we look for Him we find ourselves. Each one finds himself or herself.

So this is the search that we are looking for, or trying for. It is the cry of the human soul from childhood to death. When a child is lost and says, "I am lost," it means it is physically lost. Its mother is missing or its father is missing. But when an adult is lost, where is he? He has lost touch with his inner spring of vitality, his inner spring of existence, his inner spring of Reality, of Divinity itself. And therefore we call them lost souls. Not in the sense of any criminal or sinning soul, but where my identity or my estimation of myself has become so different from what it should be that I am afraid of myself and I would prefer myself to be lost, abandoned. In its extreme form you get this in, you know, psychological hospitals, mental hospitals, suicides. In its lesser forms, habits we pick up in trying to forget ourselves, drinking, drugs. So that is the time, you see, when we must wake up and say, "My dear friend, there is something wrong with you," patting yourself. You can be afraid of anything outside yourself, it does not matter, it does not matter at all, you see. But if you are afraid of yourself and if you would prefer not to know yourself, you are lost.

So this is the great, shall we say, situation facing a large number of human beings today. In fact my Master was bold enough to say it confronts all of us, only the degree is different. And I find this is epitomized in that great story of Snow White, you see, where the beautiful woman has to look into her mirror every day and ask, "Who is the fairest of the land?" A doubt about the self! We all have this, we have moments of them, we have days of them, weeks of them. Sometimes, unfortunately, we are always doubting ourselves.

Now, if I am given a box weighing two tons and I have a doubt whether I can lift it or not, that is not the sort of doubt I am speaking about. It is not a doubt. It is a question about my capacity to do something. But when I am torturing myself with everything I think, with everything that I do, and not because we do not know what we are doing and thinking, but because my conscience says something and my intellect says something else, then comes the situation where we are able to say, "He is being pulled apart." By whom? By himself!

So you see the need to balance my inner existence with my outer existence is of paramount importance, because without that our existence is going to be a misery. But if that balance is brought about, then it is immaterial whether you are poor or rich, whether you are educated or not, whether you are beautiful or not, whether you are powerful or not. It is immaterial because history shows us that behind such persons the world is willing to walk. They do not get Nobel prizes. They do not get university college degrees but they get the love of the people whom they help, and who are craving for that.

Now this is hardly necessary to elaborate. You take the life of Christ, with which you are all familiar. What was he? A carpenter. Nobody knows how much he learnt. Nobody knows whether he had any money or not, but when he started teaching the people followed him. He could tell the two brothers who were fishing, "Give up everything and come with me," and they were able to walk with him. And he had whole tribes following behind him. Forget the miracles that he performed, you see, two loaves and five fishes. I mean, these are children's stories for us. The miracle is that an uneducated, illiterate, poor carpenter could make thousands of people follow him, listen to him, and fight the power of the Roman empire established in those days. Because he did not appeal to them with money or power, not even wisdom because he told ordinary stories. I mean, if you read through the parables, one wonders what is so wonderful about these stories. But it was because his heart was speaking, not his head.

So that brings us back to the final point I wish to make, about yoga in the twenty-first century: the way of the heart. Today, if in the modern world we miss one thing very much, very traumatically, very drastically, you see, having everything else at least in the Western societies, it is the heart. I mean, nobody needs to ask whether this is right or wrong. You know it in your hearts. The need to love, the need to be loved. What else is it but a situation concerning your heart?

Now this is at even the ordinary mundane level of human relationship. No proof is necessary today in your modern high-tech society of Europe and the Americas. To put it very banally, you see, a heartless life is a life without life. You can have everything else, the best beds, *matela* (mattress), you know, I see this advertisement everywhere, "*Matela, matelas*," the best apartments, the best motorcars, the best planes, the best services. I mean, what is it you do not have? And you would be tempted to say, "Nothing." I will say, "*Un moment, s'il vous plait!* (One moment please.) **This** is missing." [pointing to the heart]

My Master used to say that when people offered him food he would accept from some, he would not accept from others. He used to be the guest of very rich people, professors, politicians, government officers and also of the very ordinary people. He would always accept the invitation but very rarely would he touch what was given to him. So I asked him once, "Why do not you take all this which is being put before you?" He whispered in my ear, "There are three types of invitations I get. One invites me to show how important he is that he could even bring me to his house, and he is not worried about the food. He is a rich man. He is a powerful man. He thinks automatically I should like what he offers. The second is a little better. He cannot afford, because where I go twenty people follow me. But, poor man, he invites me because that other man has invited me. A little better than the first." And I asked him, "What is the third?" He said, "They are the people who really want me, who will die for me, and their food I eat."

So you see, what a difference there is when the heart is put into it. And sometimes I used to find that from one particular person he would eat anything, even something which he should not eat. And when I asked him why, he said, "Because that person's heart is in this." And then he used to tell my wife sometimes, "When you cook, forget the salt and the pepper and the chillies and the potatoes and all this nonsense. Put your heart in it." If the heart is there, the food is excellent. But if the heart is not there it is worse than dust and ashes, as we read in the Bible in so many places.

So the heart is not a commodity just between a husband and wife, or two lovers. It must come with you, wherever you go. If you are in the kitchen, the heart must be there. You are a computer programmer, your heart must be there, too. You are in the temple, of course your heart must be there. And if you are with your lover, well, what else but the heart is necessary there! Unfortunately, in modern society, we have everything playing a part except the heart, especially in love. Therefore, there is so much tragedy, so much divorce, so much, you know, children separated from parents. And we are seeking counsel from counsellors, psychologists, from priests, when the only counsellor we should trust, we should listen to, is right within us. Therefore we call Him also the conscience, my inner voice, which I have silenced because it always gives me inconvenient answers. Now if I wish to be happy, I wish to be balanced, if I wish to be adjusted in my environment, healthy not only in body but in mind and spirit, **this** voice must be allowed to speak again. [pointing to the heart]

Therefore, brothers and sisters, the future not only of your society, my society, but the society of the world at large lies in a small thing. My Master used to say, "It is only just as big as your fist." It is the heart. So I make bold to say that forget everything else! Economics, politics, history, yes, they have a place in education, but any branch of knowledge which does not lead me, finally, to my heart is like a man wandering in a desert without water. Many of you do not understand the value of food or water in the West, but if you come to one of our countries in the Middle East, in the Far East, or if you had the unfortunate experience of being lost in a desert, even for just twenty-four hours, and if you have had the further misery of coming across a man who had water but who refused to give it to you because he needed it himself, then really your heart would weep. "Have human beings come to this pass that he cannot give me a sip of water because he is afraid of dying himself?" This is what the dying man asks. The rich man who has two bottles of water on his camel laughs. He says, "Fool, if you did not have the forethought to bring water with you, how do you expect me to give up my water to you?"

Now this you can see in the fight of our civilizations, when you read in the papers that one country destroyed five hundred tons of cheese to keep the price of cheese up, another country killed two million head of cattle to keep the price of beef up. Millions of people are dying in this world but it never came across the minds of these people and their governments to send the cheese and the cattle to those people, you see. Let them at least eat! Because our God Almighty civilization, our standard of living, you know, which is a god today, standard of living is a god, forgive my saying it. I really beg your pardon for saying it, today there is no Christ, there is no Krishna, there is only the dollar and the mark and the franc. And how do you expect your heart to be there?

When a human being will not lift up another human being who has fallen on the street, because he is afraid of getting involved. If you ask him a question, he says, "No, no, I am not afraid of lifting him up but once I lift him up what shall I do with him? I will have to take him to my house, feed him, perhaps keep him forever." Christ did not think like that when he said, "Give up your fishing nets and come with me." He had nothing, not even a handful of dates and a glass of water for himself. Yet he had the bravery and the courage and the faith to carry a whole multitude with him. And can something come out of nothing? It did! Two loaves and five fishes feeding a multitude. More important, a greater miracle, the raising of Lazarus. You see, such people have the power over life and death itself. And we are talking of stupid things like bread and butter. You see, this is the tragedy of our Western culture, education, high-tech societies, **STANDARD OF LIVING** in capital letters, in gold. Not because the poor nations of the world are dying. Let them die! You are shocked? Not necessary! Because something greater is dying than the poor people. **You** are dying! And if you die, who is going to help you?

So spirituality says, "While there is still time, while you are still alive, while you can still wake up and walk, for heaven's sake, refer to the heart! Take up the study and the practice of one side of your life which you have totally excluded from existence, the inner life." Spirituality does not say that education is unnecessary, money is unnecessary, good living is unnecessary. It does not say it. At least not in the world beyond the Suez Canal. It only says, again quoting from the Christian tradition, "All this and heaven too." Anything you want you are free to have, but do not forget this. You want to be rich? Go ahead, but with the heart. You want to be powerful? Sure, nobody can deny it, if you have the capacity, but go with the heart. Anything you want, but with the heart.

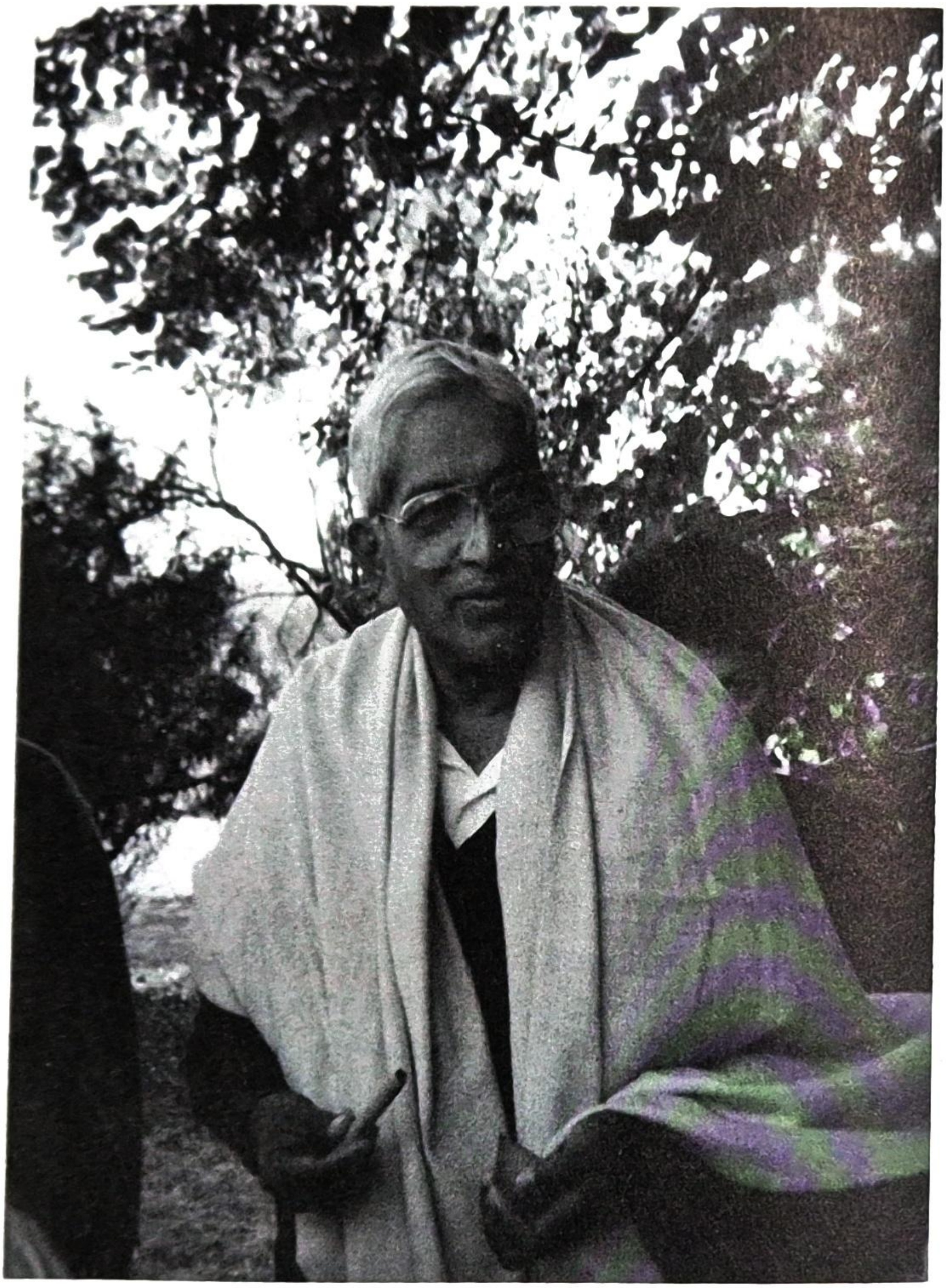
So brothers and sisters, this is the message of my Master, and I am a poor exponent of it. Because what I have taken so long to tell you, he would have told you in just three words. In the East we have the tradition, not of long lectures, involved lectures, reasoning, rationality, but a seed is sown and it is allowed to grow. In fact my Master was always amused when people used to come and ask him, "Master, which came first, the tree or the seed?" He would laugh and say, "God is not a fool to create a tree and carry it around when He can create a seed and plant it." Now this is the real way of education. The Master sows a seed within your heart, not in the brain, you see. There are other schools to cater to that. This seed, if it takes root and grows, our life is back with us and we can now live a heartfull life, full of heart, you see.

So I pray that all of you may be given this opportunity to free yourselves from all prejudices, prejudices of colour, relative importance in society, education, even religion. Because, as my Master once said, and as you all know, more people have been killed in religious wars than in any other wars. And I will close this lecture with a final statement from my Master. "All religions say there can be only one God, and there is only one God. But each religion says my God is the right one, your God is not." Now how is this possible? So he said one of the greatest things I have heard from him, "Religions divide."

So let us not forget this. It is not a criticism against any religion, **all** religions divide. "My God and your God," you see, when both of us are agreed there can be only one God. Now, if we were so sensible, so well educated, at least in the West, should we not have a round-table conference in Berne, or somewhere, shake hands and say, "We have been stupid all these centuries. We are all agreed that there can be only one God. Your God cannot be different from my God. The names are different, let us forget names. Let us just call Him, **Him** or whatever you want to call Him." The Hebrew religion did it. God is called the Nameless One. How can God have a name or a form or characteristics? However powerful He may be, if He is dependent on power there should be something higher than that. Even a modern computer, the latest computer, cannot print out for you the highest number in mathematics. Think of any number. There is one number higher than that. Why one number? Infinite numbers more than that. So this is the genius of the East, that it said, "If God has power, there must be some more power, X+." You see, there is always an X+, N+, whatever it is.

He can be the source of power, but He cannot have the power Himself. He cannot be the possessor of knowledge, though all knowledge may come from Him. Therefore when we say, "Forget even religion," it only means forget the names, the qualities, the birth places of our gods. Because all religions are agreed that divine powers come again and again in various places. He who comes as a Buddha once, comes as a Christ in another place, in another time. There is only a change of name, form and geography, not of the essence. Spirituality says, "If you go with this, with the head, you are dividing yourselves. Go with the heart and you find we are all united in one grand, great family worshiping the One who is in all of us. And His presence in us makes us all brothers and sisters." So that is the message of spirituality, that is the promise of spirituality. And a final quotation from my Master, he used to say, "Read and enjoy, do and feel." So we invite you to do and feel His presence. Thank you for your patient hearing, and please forgive me if anything I have said hurt your sentiments or your beliefs. [applause]

Please do not expect just one meditation to prove anything to you. Because in this system of meditation we do not get anything. It helps us to lose, progressively, all that we have accumulated inside ourselves until, as I said, we become so subtle that the inner subtlety and the outer subtlety must match. And we can say, "*Voila!* It is this." So this invitation to meditate should not be treated as a test or a trial, you know, like a sample of a product. But I hope you will feel something which may bring you closer to what you are seeking and persuade you to follow it further. Thank you.



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Public Talk

Nice, France
June 23, 1988

Greetings to all of you.

I had the privilege of coming here with my Master, Shri Ram Chandraji, in 1972. In a sense, that was the beginning of our activity in Europe. I am happy to be here again with all of you this evening. I hope to tell you something about him who came here first and the method that he taught us of his spiritual discipline and what to do, how to do it, what to become, what is our goal, for instance.

My Master was seventy-three years old when he came here first. He was born in 1899. As a human being he was really an average Indian. Some of you may have seen his photograph in the posters we have put up, below. Very simple, very unassuming and, in a sense, very Indian. He did not have much education. He, himself, used to laugh and say, "I am not an educated person at all." I think he had about six years of school. He lived in the same place in which he was born which is called Shahjahanpur, in north India. It is situated in the state of Uttar Pradesh. Some of you may know India. Quite a backward state, except that politically it is advanced because, so far, most of the leaders of India have come from that state: Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, Indira Gandhi, Rajiv Gandhi. But otherwise it was quite backward, economically backward, socially backward, and he shared in that. As I said, he did not have much education. He did not travel much until I met him in 1964, except within his own state.

Nevertheless, he became what we consider to be one of the very rare spiritual personalities this world has produced. And when I met him in 1964, he was just an ordinary old man of sixty-five. And, personally for me, the first meeting with him was quite a disappointment. Because I had gone with expectations of finding a big building, you know, well organized, somebody to receive you, a reception table, things like that. There was nothing.

He was sleeping in one of the rooms. And there was nobody else to even say, "Hello, welcome!" So I just went and sat next to his cot until he woke up. To tell you the truth, I was cursing myself for having gone there, because I had gone something like three hundred kilometres, and you know, in India it is a long distance. But when he woke up, and I saw him sit up in his bed, it was my good fortune that my whole conception of that man underwent a strange transformation. It was from the heart. Because, when I judged him with my head, he was still a very average Indian. Nothing much to talk about, nor had he much to say anything about, because when he started speaking, he spoke only of one thing, his Master, and the spiritual way that he had received from him. So that was the only thing I learned from him, to talk about his Master and his method, which is the subject for me today, "My Master and His Method."

So the Master was a very average person, substandard in size, a short person, below par in education, no social advancement. In fact, very little to appeal to one of us in the modern age. And, as I said, I was a little upset that I had gone to see him. I had gone there only for a few hours. But with his usual charming manner, he sent somebody to take my bag out of my car. And I, who went to stay with him for two hours, stayed for, I think, nearly a week that first visit, because his charm, his attractiveness, was something which was, you know, like the perfume from a flower, very difficult to smell, even. So fragile, so all-pervasive nevertheless, that once I went in I could not come out. I mean, Europeans will laugh when I say such a thing, you see, but I will remind you that there is such a thing as love at first sight. It is an accepted thing in your Western societies, that one **can** fall in love just with one look. I suspect that is what happened to me when I first saw him, or rather, when he saw me, because while he was still sleeping with his face to the wall, I had a very poor opinion of him. It was in his eyes that everything was contained. And then I realised the old saying that, "The eyes are the windows of the soul."

That was one of the first lessons I learned, too. If you want to know what somebody is, the qualities of that person, look at the eyes. Because the eyes go into the heart, as it were. That is why many people who do not want to expose themselves are afraid to meet eye to eye. It is the most revealing thing. And another thing you will find in magazines, where they show the faces of criminals, they put a black strip across the eyes. And although the whole face is still there, you cannot recognize the person. So you see, this was a big revelation to me that it is the eye that matters in the face, nothing else. And unfortunately you spend money on cosmetic surgery changing the shape of your nose, changing the shape of your lips. Not without reason, because there can be no cosmetic surgery of the eyes. I think that is one of the things that God has reserved for Himself. Everything else you can change, but the eyes you cannot change. At least that is what I thought. But later on I found that as people started associating with him, moving with him, practising his system of yoga, all the inner changes that they acquired in themselves, by his help, began to be reflected in their eyes, too.

I have often found that when people came to see him, most of them my Master did not know. He could never remember names. He could not get foreign names at all because he could not pronounce them. He never could understand them. But when somebody came he looked at two places. He looked at the heart and he looked at the eyes. He never had to look at a person a second time. And this was something that was astonishing to me. We are taught so many sciences, how to know a person, you see, physiognomy, physiology, psychology, and here was a man, an old man without education, without scientific knowledge, and yet with one glance, you see, just once and it was over. And I have known him, even after fifteen years when a person returned to him, he knew all about him. Not in the material sense that he has advanced physically, or mentally, or economically, but everything about his inner self, his heart, his soul.

So even though I had been used to dealing with scientific knowledge and, you know, the acquisition of knowledge from the West, I was tempted to learn this from him, how in one glance to know everything about a person. Later on I discovered that his capacity was not restricted only to persons. He could know about places. Sometimes people would ask him, "What is it like in such and such a country?" He did not even know the name of the place. And we used to have fun by spreading an atlas or a map of the world and telling him, "This country, what is happening there right now?" And again, you know, he would just look at the map once, look at the sky once, and tell you what you wanted to know. So that vision was not confined to reading a human heart but to read anything that it wishes to see.

Once, I remember, we were some fifteen or twenty of us sitting with him after dinner at about eleven o'clock at night. In Shahjahanpur, where he used to live, very often we had no electricity in those days. One man had brought his transistor radio because he was addicted to listening to the news. But that day his batteries failed, there was no electricity. And he was quite upset, you know, that he was not able to hear the news, what was going on in the world. My Master must have sensed his inner agitation. He said, "Come here. Sit with me. You want to listen to the news? I will tell you the news without a radio." The most astonishing thing was that, the next morning, we could see in the newspaper everything he had said the previous night.

Now that was another revelation. But the most fascinating revelation was not revealed for many years, that he could tell you what is going to happen. Not to a person, not to a place, but to a whole country for instance, a whole world. And this was so fascinating that people began to ask him questions, as if he was an astrologer, and then he stopped revealing these capacities of his because his disciples were being diverted away from spirituality into these occult sciences. That was the next lesson, that we should not use these powers for just curiosity's sake. Like somebody stands here with a pair of binoculars and wants to know what is going on in all the houses, you see.

I understood that spirituality forbids knowledge which you do not need, while at the same time giving you all the knowledge that you need for your work. This was, for me, a very great exposition of the limitation of knowledge that, on the one hand, you had access to infinite knowledge when you needed it for your work, without ever studying a book, whereas on the other hand, nothing would be shown to you, or made known to you, which you did not need.

Sometimes this limitation used to trouble me, you see, because I had this sort of a Westernized mind, and a craze for knowledge, for the sake of knowledge itself. Then I understood, you know, what is the use of accumulating knowledge which we are never going to use? It is like, you know, a squirrel which goes on gathering nuts which it never eats, or a rich man accumulating millions and millions and millions of dollars or francs. And that was one lesson I learned from my Master, that it is not really material whether I am accumulating fat in the body, or books in my library, or money in my bank. They are all useless because, as the Eastern philosophy says, "You are not going to take anything with you when you leave," not even knowledge. And essentially there is no difference with what you are accumulating.

I like to emphasize this because sometimes in the West, in the Occident, there is a tendency to make a moral difference between this and this. For instance, there is a general feeling that a professor is a better man than a rich man. There seems to be something dirty about a rich man. But my Master taught me there is no essential difference. Both are wasting time accumulating useless things. Because what you cannot use is useless to you. That it has some knowledge, or some use somewhere else, is of no concern. Then I asked him what I should do with the spare time. I said, "Suppose I do not accumulate these useless things, I am going to save a lot of time." Now time is something you cannot accumulate. You know, we are always talking of saving time in the West. It is a craze. While you have auto routes, "Oh, I go to Marseilles in two hours." And there are friends, like my friend here with the camera, who will go tomorrow in twenty minutes. Yes, but what will you do with the time you have saved? Because, you know, when you save money, somebody else can use it. When you buy books, somebody else can read them. When I accumulate anything in the physical world, it is usable by somebody else. But time is something which, if you save, you have got to use yourself.

And this is the crux of human development in spirituality. Because while in the Occident, especially today, you are masters of saving time, you are totally stupid in utilising that saved time, if you permit me to say so. We run like mad from here to some place, doing a journey in one hour, which your father would have completed in ten hours, twelve hours. And then we sit on the *plage* or drink beer in some restaurant, or have coffee in a cafe. Not only are you wasting the time you have saved, you are wasting some money on that, too.

So you see, everything else which we save has some benefit, not to us perhaps, but to somebody else. So we have these great foundations, the Watmull Foundation, the Ford Foundation, the Rockefeller Foundation. They give lots of money to students, to build hospitals, you know, for all sorts of funny things. But we are all saving time, every one of us. Spirituality says, "What have you done with that time?"

So this was a great secret. I mean, it is a well-known secret, which everybody knows. But it was to me a secret revealed by my Master, that here is one resource of nature which you cannot create again. We can create wealth, we can create knowledge, but nobody yet has created time. Once gone, it is gone forever. That is why we are all so anxious to live longer. Isn't it? Maybe living longer is a way of, well it is a fallacy, it is an illusion, but we think we are creating more time for ourselves. Therefore the human obsession with long life. And you can see it in the Mayan civilization, the Inca civilization, the civilization of Greece, the civilization of Egypt, with their preserved mummies, with their death rituals, and in their longing for immortality.

So you see, we are conscious within our hearts that here is a vital resource of nature — time — which we are not able to conserve. Why? Because you are not able to use it effectively. And when we are able to use it effectively, thanks to modern technology and science, it is thrown on the science of the plazas and the restaurants. My Master said, "This is a criminal waste. Because you are not just wasting time, which would not matter much, but you are really wasting your life." Because life is nothing but an extension in time of myself, as I see myself. It applies to every one of you. When you say, "I am six years old," it means I have lived on this planet for what we call six years. And people want to know what you have been doing. "What do you do for a living? What do you do in the evenings?" The standard question nowadays, "What do you do in the evenings?"

In some way we seem to think that the evenings have to be wasted in fun, wasted in pleasure. And then, next morning, we wake up with a headache and, worse, a heartache. "I have made so many resolutions that from today I will not waste my evenings. I will sit down and study Greek, or Latin, or computer science," whatever it may be. But a Francois came or a Francoise came and my resolutions were thrown to the wind. And one irretrievable evening is lost. So this is how our time is going.

So the first lesson of yoga is to use time correctly. And what is the way of utilising time correctly? Live correctly. How to live correctly? Think correctly. Because from thinking comes all activities. Therefore raja yoga concerns itself solely with the mind, the regulation of the mind. I say this because today there are so many yoga systems in the world. I personally know of at least twenty-five of them. And in Europe I am sorry to say that very often what we find as yoga here is not really yoga. It is another physical system of health. And people, because they are body-oriented here, they want to stay young, they want to look beautiful, these hatha yoga schools are flourishing and they make a lot of money. But I would like to tell you that it is also a waste of time. Because thin or fat, tall or short, poor or rich, an educated man or a stupid fellow, nothing matters except the proper use of time.

And if you study the lives of the great saints of the past, whether it was Christ, whether it was Mohammed, whether it was Buddha, or, in modern times, my own Master, if they were anything which entitled them to be called a master, they were masters of time. Which only means that they were masters of themselves. Because only one who has mastered himself can master the time at his disposal. Because we all, you know, we want to change. We want to be good. We want to be useful. We make resolutions all the time. So, if we waste time it is not because we want to waste time, but because we have no control of ourselves.

So you see, mastery of time means mastering the self, overcoming grosser tendencies, habits which we have formed, and guiding the life in a positive way, where the body does not assert itself any more and make us slaves of it, nor even the mind makes slaves of us — but where the body and the mind become servants of the self, working under his orders, his control, the body going where he wants it to go, the mind thinking what he or she wants it to think. Whereas now we are, you know, we are literally governed by our bodies and our minds. So a master is nothing more than one who has learned to absolutely regulate his functions.

Now there is a funny thing here. What is the way to achieve this? I thought there must be a lot of esoteric teachings. You see, again the addiction to Greek philosophy and to things like that, that you have to get it from outside. It does not matter whether it is Chinese philosophy, or Greek philosophy, or German philosophy, or French philosophy. It does not matter at all. We depend upon others for our knowledge.

So when I asked Master, "How to become this that you have become? What did you study?", he laughed. He said, "My dear boy, you are still addicted to knowledge as you know knowledge: books, libraries, calculators." "Yes," I said, "but how am I to know what I have to do myself?" He said, "Sit down, close your eyes and I will teach you." For a moment I thought he was a little crazy, and I even more crazy. Imagine teaching somebody with your eyes closed. And assuming he could do it, imagine my learning something with my eyes closed. But that miracle occurred. Otherwise I would not be here speaking to you about it.

Now very often in the West when we come here and we sit and say, "We are going to meditate. Please close your eyes. Sit comfortably," there are always some persons who come and ask, "How can you achieve anything sitting quietly with your eyes closed?" This question is inevitable and it is understandable because I had the question myself in my mind. How on earth can you do anything sitting down with your eyes closed?

In fact, my Master once told me that his own mother once accused him, saying, "You are sitting with your eyes closed and fooling yourself. And not only are you fooling yourself, you are fooling the others who come to you." And then she asked him one famous question, "Have you seen that which you are trying to show to them?" So you see, his mother could not believe that it was possible. His father thought he was crazy because he had no ambition, he had no interest in money, he had no interest in books, "Just sitting under a tree closing your eyes and lost to this world." And when he came back, if you asked him, "What have you got?" he had nothing to show. What can you show which is inside yourself? Now it is not so difficult to understand, because if you say to somebody, "You say you love me. Show me your love," I mean, there are ways of showing that you love, but you cannot show love itself. You can bring a flower. You can bring a costly present. They are symbols of love but not love itself.

So, when we cannot show such a natural and a very ordinary human thing like love, what is the difficulty in understanding that the Master cannot show his inner condition to us? But I asked my Master how to know it. He said, "You will see it for yourself, within yourself." And the miracle happened, you see, progressively, little by little. I was able to see things happening to myself, which I could never have made happen by myself, and things which nobody else could have done for me because they were beyond the scope of education, as we understand education. They were beyond the scope of the physical laws, the chemical sciences as we know them to be today. Because this cultural hangover is with us, you see, that you put something with something and something else happens. But how can you sit and meditate on yourself, within yourself, and change yourself?

This was a great lesson he taught me, you see, that if a human being wants to transform himself or herself, he or she has to work upon himself or herself. Therefore we become, number one, the experimenter. We become the person operating the experiment. We are the object of the experiment ourselves. And when we change, we again see ourselves as the changed person that we have become. It is something not quite difficult but a little out of the way to accept.

When I was a young boy I had an experience. Everyone has known this. I do not know whether here it is possible, but in the East, children travelling in trains, we have those old trains, you know, very slow and they stop at the railway stations sometimes for thirty minutes, forty minutes. And then children used to get impatient and stand against the wall, and try to push the train from inside. Now it is something impossible. You cannot move something from within itself. This is a standard bit of knowledge which all human beings know. If your car stops, you have to get out and push it. No amount of pushing from inside is going to move that car. But here is a science which says you can move yourself from within yourself and find yourself in a different situation under a different set of inner conditions, more peaceful for instance, more at harmony with our environment, more capable of speaking to people, understanding them, making them understand you. And eventually you find that you could love everybody without having to love.

That was the test that my Master said should be applied to anybody who calls himself spiritual: "Is he capable of a love which does not judge?" You know, you have this tradition in Christianity, "Judge not that ye be not judged." But it says only half to my understanding. It says do not judge because you should not be judged yourself. I do not think it is complete. We should not judge because we have no right to judge. We have no desire to judge. And why should I love something which is good? What is so wonderful about loving a good thing? As I tell the young boys in India who come to us to hear our talks, "Any fool can love a beautiful girl but he is a lover who loves a girl who is not so beautiful but who shines with inner beauty." So you put up a poster of Marilyn Monroe. Every boy in town is crazy, "Oh! I love her!" What is wonderful about her?

So you see, love really means going beyond the human figure, the human form, the human qualities. It is not charity as Christianity understands charity. "Be charitable unto others." No please! I am not criticizing Christianity because I am a great lover of Christ myself. I studied it in school. I had to study Christianity in school. Because in the days of the British Raj in India in what we call public schools, Christianity was compulsory. For me it was a fortunate thing, otherwise I would never have studied it. But the point is, how did I come to this understanding that a master must love without judgement? Through my practice, because when you look inside yourself in meditation, inevitably you find all the ugly things, the dirty things, the stupid things inside. There have been occasions, during meditations, when I have had so much nausea that I have had to vomit physically. I was nauseated with myself. Now when you are exposed to your inner condition, you see, outside you can clean and, you know, polish and paint. What about **this** inside here?

You remember the story of Christ when an adulterer was about to be stoned to death by the evil laws of those days. He came and he said, "Let him cast the first stone who has not sinned." And he said something more. He said, "Sinning is not only of the body. The sin starts with the mind." He was very explicit. He said, "If you have lusted after a woman in your mind, it is a sin." So when my Master taught me to go into myself — I mean, there is nothing I am exposing, because if you go into yourself, you are going to find the same things. The same things about which we are ashamed, which make us crazy, miserable, hate ourselves and which self-hatred is the cause of most of the broken marriages of the world today. Now when you find this in yourself, how can you possibly blame anybody else? Because if there is anything, I am worse than everybody else. This is what we feel.

I would like to tell you a beautiful story here about a young boy who went to a master and wanted to become his disciple. The master said, "Come to me with something you can give me." The boy said, "Anything you want?" The master said, "Yes. Find me the worst thing in this world that you can find." The boy thought, "It is a stupid thing. How can it be difficult to find the worst thing? To find the best thing, yes. But to find the worst thing?" But he went from one bad thing to another bad thing to another bad thing, and the search was endless. At no time could he say, "Yes, this is the worst thing." And he was despairing of ever bringing this worst thing to his master. Excuse me for what is going to follow. He was sitting in the toilet one day and then suddenly he decided, "This is the worst thing in the world. Nobody wants to touch it. Nobody wants to smell it. Who will ever taste it? You do not want to even see it!" And he said to himself, "Aha! This is the worst thing in the world because all human beings think it is the worst thing in the world." So he put out his hand to take some of the waste when a voice came from that and said, "Stop! What are you going to do with me?" The young boy said, "Well, my master said, Bring the worst thing in the world. I have found it today." Then the voice said, "Reflect a moment. Yesterday evening I was apple pie. I was ice cream. I was *gâteau*. And you touched me and I have become this. Now you may decide for yourself, what is the worst thing in the world." Then, you know, the young boy had this inner awakening and he went back empty-handed to his master, prostrated himself before him and said, "Please accept me as your disciple." The Master said, "Where is the worst thing in the world?" He answered, "I am here Master. I am the worst thing in the world."

Now this is the sort of humility that comes when we look inside ourselves. And then only is it possible to have compassion for others who are sinners as we call them, who make mistakes, who suffer because of a guilt complex. And the master is able to tell them, "Do not worry about it, because there is no human being who has been free of these things. There has never been a human being who has ever been free of these things. But do not despair. There is a way of changing yourself." So this was the way my Master taught me, not merely to have compassion for others, friendship for others, love for others but, much more important, to have compassion for myself, to have sympathy for myself, and slowly to change myself in such a way that I could love myself.

Now please do not mistake this for some sort of narcissistic love. That is a silly thing. But this is the inner vital self with which I am happy. So my inner self and my outer self achieve a balance, and I can face the world without any problems whatsoever. Therefore it has nothing to do with narcissism as such. And it is this transformation which makes us love people irrespective of what they are doing, or what they are. See, there is a famous statement of Swami Vivekananda. I am sure you have heard his name. In India we have all sorts of funny notions and one of them concerns prostitutes. They are looked upon as something dirty, something filthy, something nasty, degraded, everything, you see, though the men cannot do without them. So once Swami Vivekananda was addressing a big gathering in Calcutta. His subject was the Indian woman and he made that famous remark, you see, talking about prostitution. He said, "Do not look down upon these fallen sisters of yours, because if they did not exist, your sister and your mother and your wife could be prostitutes." See, such a great statement, such an open statement from the heart. And in the India of those days, you see, the beginning of the century, the end of the last century, it required tremendous courage to make such a statement. Now how could he develop such courage? You find this in the life of all the great masters. Christ who could overturn the money changers' tables in the temple. Buddha who could do anything he liked when he was faced with the devils which tempted him. The temptation of Christ on the mountain. Nothing could shake them. Why? I asked my Master this question about six years after I first came to him. And he told me two things.

The first thing is, there is nothing more terrible outside you than there is inside you. All the devils are in us. Isn't it? The devil of vice, the devil of crime, the devil of lust, the devil of, I mean, name it, we have it. And then he said something else, you see, the second thing. He said they could not be tempted by anything in the universe because anything you could talk about or offer, they had within themselves. Much more, in fact, because the inner universe is vastly more extensive than the external universe. In it is everything that we can ever hope for, and, indeed, much more than we can ever hope for. So you see, fear goes and we are unable to be tempted any more, because everything is here.

So this is the way of going inwards, finding out about yourself, first not in some encyclopedic way that, you know, this happened on this day, this happened, not like that, but it is a value judgement. "Yes, I was this. I was this. I was this." And then the Master says, "Why do you worry about it? You can overcome all this nonsense." "How long will it take?" Because it is a very common question that, according to many religions we have lived in the past, we are going to live again in the future. How are we to remove all these dreadful accumulations of so many lives? Then he told me something which is so very utterly simple. He said, "If you do not sleep for a week, do you have to sleep seven times more than normal? One night's good sleep is enough. You do not eat for fifteen days. Can you possibly eat all the food of those fifteen days? One meal today is enough." I asked him how this was relevant to all this. He said, "Similarly, my dear boy, all the accumulations of dirt and filth you have got here, it can be removed in no time at all." And then was that mystery revealed, you see, how to really save time. Because to save time on a long voyage, it takes time. If you want to go somewhere in four hours which you could do in eight hours, you need these four hours. To save money, you need money first. One who has no money cannot possibly save money.

But here is something which we all have because nature, in its magnanimity, gave us all certain things without considerations of caste, creed, race, colour: water to drink, air to breathe, food to eat, and time to exist in. Now we have become experts in, you know, reducing our requirements of food, water, medicines, forgetting that my life is going to come to an end some day. And that life is measured in years and days and months. It is only time. And if I can use this time correctly, effectively, I can master that time.

So you see, these are the few things my Master taught me in his life. The important lesson being, "You do not have to be educated. You do not have to be healthy. You do not have to be rich. In fact you have only to be a human." It is enough. Nothing else is necessary.

There was a great saint in India who said, "There are three things which are very difficult to achieve and one of them is human birth." Of course many of us will say, "What is so hot about being a human being? I am miserable, you know, I do not even want to live." And there are people who think so poorly of their life that they are even willing to end it by committing suicide. Nevertheless, it is the highest form of evolved life so far. And we are fortunate to be human beings.

The second thing he said was, "To find a master." Because they do not come every day, you see. Sometimes thousands of years pass before another Master comes to you. Third thing is, after finding him use him! Because to repeat this strong point again and again, when we use him correctly we use ourselves correctly, we use time correctly. So I was very fortunate that I was a human being. I had a Master, not in the sense of having money, or having an education, but in the sense of having him in me.

This was one of the culminating experiences because, inevitably, we become attached to the Master who is living outside. We learn to love him. We learn to depend on him like a child runs to its mother whenever it is in trouble. But that dependence on the physical Master is a barrier to our further development and eventually, when we are successful at this meditation that we practise, we are able to achieve this very, very remarkable miracle that when we look inside we no longer find ourselves. We find the Master inside. Then we carry him with us and the outside Master becomes not unimportant, but he is there, he is here too. And this is more important because the outer form, the outer figure, the outer existence, must go some day. It happened with my Master in 1983, you see, inevitable. Then what should we do?

So the culminating teaching of our yogic practice is not only to find the happiness inside, knowledge inside, but in some way to bring the Master into your heart so that He is there as your eternal companion. And then He becomes the controller of my life, not from outside as a teacher but from inside as myself. So that is the, well I cannot say it is the last thing because we learn more and more as we go on, even with Master inside us. But I would say it is, perhaps, the final truth that is revealed, that one who does not have a Master inside himself cannot be master of himself. And I discovered this in one of my meditational experiences, that when I looked for myself I could only find my Master. And when I asked him about it he said, "Look for Him inside and you will find Him and then you will find it in yourself."

I had a remarkable experience that I was going through a tunnel very fast and when I come out at the other end there was an enormous crystal ball. And in it I first saw the figure of his Master, my Master's Master. And when I approached it closer I found my Master. The figure changed to that of my Master. And when I approached it close, I only saw my own figure in it. So my Master told me this very great truth, "Look for Him, find yourself. But look for yourself, you find nothing." That is why much of our search for happiness, for fulfillment, is so much fraught with tragedy and despair, because we are searching for the self. That is why, in spiritual terms, God-realisation and self-realisation are the same. Because God is the Self. Without Him we cannot exist and when we find Him inside ourself, as our Self, there is no blasphemy in saying, "I am like God at least."

When you have money in your pockets, you are rich. When you have some knowledge here, you say you are wise. And if a day comes when I find God within me what is wrong in saying, "I am Godly?" But it is a dangerous thing to say, because Christ was crucified for it, as you all know. "I am the son of God," he said. But when the truth is there, the truth cannot be hidden. As one of the, I think the Christian, parable says, "Hide not thy lamp under a bushel." A bushel, I do not know what you call it these days, something to measure grain, because when the light shines, it has to illuminate. It cannot hide itself and say, "No, no, I do not want to be disturbed. I do not want to shine." So there can be no anonymity, no privacy, no personal life for such a person. So it is a great personal sacrifice that a Master becomes a Master. He has to literally lose himself, and when he finds himself again it is right to say he has found himself. He is also no more himself.

Now in the West, this is a very troublesome thing because people will say, "Who wants to lose himself? I want to be myself. I want to live longer, enjoy life more. There is so much

I have not enjoyed yet and what is this crazy thing you are talking about here in Nice of all places?"

But as I said, the truth has to be spoken, and unless we are able to find ourselves here, we are not going to find it outside. And be assured that all our search for pleasure and happiness outside is nothing but this search wrongly projected outside. It is like looking into a mirror to make sure you are beautiful. We are depending on a mere mirror. And you know that famous story of, I think Snow White. Day after day the queen looked in the mirror, and she was happy enough when it said, "You are the most beautiful." She had to make sure every day. And it was a tragedy. In the modern life we have an additional thing in the bathroom, the weighing machine. You see, our happiness is hinging on mirrors and weighing machines. Where are we?

So spirituality says throw away all this nonsense. You are what you feel yourself to be. You may look most beautiful, most gorgeously beautiful. But here, inside your heart, if you feel sick, if you feel ugly, if you feel dirty, all this beauty is a waste. And if you have the beauty here, inside yourself, your face cannot but be the most beautiful, whatever be your age.

I do not know how many of you have been to India, but some of the most beautiful women I have seen are the old women, sixty-five years old, seventy years old, who have every bit of suffering engraved on their faces in sculpture. The face shows the life and the eyes reveal the enormous humility, love, compassion, that they have developed because of personal suffering. And the combination is beautiful. It is no longer beauty. It is beautiful.

So this is the way of beauty, of health, whether you are a man or a woman. Unfortunately nowadays we depend on calories or proteins or carbohydrates or mirrors and weighing machines. So what should be within us, we have thrown outside. And how are you going to find it in yourself? So please, think over these things and try to, I mean, if it is possible, accept it, that nothing which is not within me is really mine. Books can be destroyed, money can be lost, can be stolen, can be, I mean, so many things can happen to it. Health can be lost. Every quality that we think is important to us is a losable quality, destructible quality. And if you will permit me to say it, it is more self-destructive than anything else.

All of you know, you see, there are two things which destroy us: a woman's beauty and a man's power. It is, unfortunately, in Europe we have to speak about these things where few people will agree. But a woman's beauty is her greatest enemy. Because then people come to her, not for herself, not for her heart, not for her tenderness, not for her love, not for her affection, but for her face and her lips and her figure. And then when the man has had his fill of her and goes away, she weeps her heart out. The same thing happens to the man with his power. He is respected for his power. People go to him because he is powerful. People are willing to kiss his feet because he is powerful. And one day his power is lost. Nobody even looks at him again.

So spirituality teaches us to avoid both the beauty of form and figure, the beauty even of qualities like happiness. It makes us seek that which can be eternal, which cannot corrupt us. Because, that which has no quality *per se*, having which we have really nothing, but having which we have everything in the world, something which nobody can lay his hands on, nobody can rob, nobody can corrupt. And when I asked my Master, "What is this?" he said, "You know it. It is the Self." When the self becomes divinized, it is as if, you see, you are the master of this world, the master of this universe.

Now sorrow cannot touch you and, fortunately, happiness cannot touch you too. This is something which is difficult to accept. But all ancient philosophies have taught us that these two things go side by side, happiness and sorrow, light and darkness, wisdom and stupidity. Where one does not exist, the other cannot exist. So we are taught to rise beyond them both. As I said in the beginning, "We are not taught not to judge, so that we should not be judged." But we come to the realisation that there is nothing to judge. Because inside me there is nothing, though there is the whole universe itself. Now when there is nothing in me, we do not call it nothing, we call it nothingness. Who is the judge? Who is to be judged and what is to be judged? And such a person sees the same thing in everybody, because the reality inside the heart of every person in the universe is the same. Then what is this all about? You can ask, "Why this lecture? Why this talk? Why this yoga business?" Because it is like something which is covered up, like a lamp with dirty glass around it. Clean it and the light is the same. So the whole thing is nothing, you know, we do not become pure. My Master's teaching does not recognize anything as pure or impure. It only says there is an original condition which we have covered over by our activities and our thoughts. Remove this and then you expose the inner reality, which was always there.

That is why such a person cannot judge, because he sees himself in everything. There is a famous couplet in the *Bhagavad Gita*. It says, "He who sees me everywhere and sees everything in me, such a man is a devotee, and he and I can never be parted."

So it is wrong, even, to say that Master is compassionate. He has no compassion. He has no criticism. He does not approve. He does not disapprove. He accepts those who come to him for his service, smiles when he sees our suffering and our misery and, with love, he says, "Wait a little. The difference between you and me does not exist. Wait till I remove this ignorance which you think you are, and then you will find you are there."

You know it is like children. They want to be like the parents, like the father and the mother. A little girl wants to be like the mother. The little boy wants to be like the father. They try to put on their parents' clothes, walk in their shoes, and they say, "Wait my dear son or daughter. In time you will be like me."

This is no more difficult than that. There at least the child has to grow. It is a physical growth. He may never become like the father, you know, tall as his father, big as his father. He may become like the mother, you know, slim and short. But here, because it is the inner divinity that is being revealed, and which is the same everywhere, he is able to give the assurance you shall be like me provided you do what I did. There is no question of ifs, and buts.

So today, my dear sisters and brothers, I have put together my Master's life and his teachings. The practical aspect of it is a very simple thing. We meditate. Now what is meditation? My Master said, "When you think continuously about something, it is meditation." And he said, "All of us are meditating all the time." Somebody is meditating on money, somebody on his girlfriend, somebody on the power that he wishes to achieve. And therefore they achieve that because they are meditating on that. They are not just thinking about it. All that we do here is meditate on something higher than all these things, the Self in the form of light in the heart and, through that, progress stage by stage to the ultimate revelation of the reality within us.

This technique is very simple. It can be followed by anybody. We are often asked, "I am a Christian, or I am a

Buddhist, can we do it?" My Master said, "So long as you are a human being, that is all that is necessary." And in any case, spirituality begins where religion ends. Religions have always divided us, Christian fighting Muslim, Moslems fighting among themselves and everybody says, "My God is the highest, is the greatest." There can be only one God. But yet we cannot agree that the same God is for all of us. And the second thing, which is very unfortunate, religion has always used two weapons, fear and temptation. If you do wrong you go to hell. Therefore come to me and confess. I will absolve you of your sins. Or if you do good you shall go to heaven. Spirituality has no instruments of temptation or fear. Spirituality says very bluntly, "If you are afraid of anything, it is really yourself you are afraid of, not of something out in the darkness, or in the jungles. Change this and you have nothing to be afraid of."

So you see, spirituality puts the onus, the responsibility for your growth, on yourself. It does not tempt you, it does not terrify you. Therefore in our spiritual system we do not have any rules and regulations except to say, "For your welfare, try to regulate your life in such a way that it is sensible, and do this practice one hour in the morning, some ten minutes in the evening, ten minutes at bed time and find for yourself the change in yourself." Because the proof of transformation must come from inside.

There is nobody here who can say, "Oh, she is a saint or he is a saint." And saints are not to be judged by their miracles, because there are saints who never perform miracles. So how to judge and who is to judge? Because there is one law which we should never forget: that a superior can judge an inferior but an inferior can never judge a superior. So if at all we have to judge, it is ourselves. Then work upon ourselves without dissatisfaction, without despair, without self-hatred. Convert ourselves into that sublime reality and the whole thing is finished.

So this is the life and the message of my Master, as I have understood it. And if you need any more information or any literature on this, or help in practising meditation, we have people who are able to guide you. We have a number of them, you can pick up a list of addresses. Also at the moment we are having a three-month seminar, weekly seminars in Courmettes. So any one of you, or all of you, who are willing to come and talk to us, see what is going on, I welcome all of you there because, however much I wish to talk, it is impossible to recollect everything and say it here. So I invite all of you to see us, know more about it and I hope you will practise it and find the benefits.

Thank you.

3

Public Talk

Cannes, France,
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Bonjour, Bonsoir.

We are a group which meditates. And my Master has said it is the natural way of realisation, which is called Sahaj Marg. Now, we are all familiar with meditation, and according to my guru, my Master, meditation is to think continuously about something. Now why do we call it a natural way? Because there are so many ways of meditation and, in India itself, there are hundreds and hundreds of ways. In fact, India can be called the home of meditation because even though the written records are going back only four or five thousand years, there is a tradition of the teaching being passed on by word of mouth, from guru to disciple, for long, long periods before that, which it is not possible to estimate.

But there has been one difference between what we are doing and what, even in India, they were doing, and that is they were using forms, maybe forms of gods, forms of something which they call Ishta Devata, you see, or they were using mantras which were supposed to have meaning, supposed to have power. And when we analyze this, we find that most of those systems were oriented towards acquisition of powers. Hatha yoga for physical power, mantras for transcendental powers of a religious, psychic nature, and the forms of various gods and goddesses for transcendental powers supposed to be Divine, but in all cases it was power.

My Master said, "To have power is not only bad for us, but any power which you get from outside can be removed from you by a higher power." And that is why we find, in the Hindu religious scriptures, fascinating stories of the wars between the forces of the right and the wrong. And what is even more fascinating is the fact that the forces of evil could also do meditation and get the same powers, or the higher powers, some very often higher than what the good people could get. So, we had a system or systems of *tapas,* as we called it, where the giver of these powers did not seem to appreciate the difference between good people and bad people, and he seemed to hand out power to everybody in an irrational way. Of course, to us it is irrational. It only means that good or bad, if you do the right thing, the right result must come.

So, we have in India this ancient and very great tradition, this heritage that *ipso facto* there is no difference between a good person and a bad person. Because our goodness or badness is only manifested in what we think and what we do. And, I think, from this they came to the conclusion that the inner person is always divine. Therefore the search in India has always been to find the inner person, the Self of the self, as we call it.

And from this tradition came the different aspect of yoga which we call raja yoga. In raja yoga one is not supposed to be going for powers. It is supposed to be the way of self-development up to the highest possible extent, which my Master calls divinisation, realisation, things like that. And he defines realisation and divinisation as, "The perfection of the human being." And the naturalness of Sahaj Marg comes into this picture because, in this system, we do not use any names, any forms. The meditation is on the heart. And there is no hankering or demand, or even prayer, for power because power is unnecessary for spiritual growth, spiritual development.

And my Master taught that power *per se* has no meaning because when we develop ourselves spiritually, in all purity of the mind and the heart, nature opens its great treasuries of power and, for such a person, any power in the universe is available. It is not his power. But all powers are available for use, according to the situation which demands the use of power. But here please remember that he, himself, for his development, did not need any power of any sort. When such a person becomes a saint, or a divinised person, he becomes an intermediary for Nature's work, he becomes an agent of Nature. And therefore Nature allows its powers to flow through him.

My Master has taught further that, very often, such a person is not even conscious of the use of the powers that he is using. This is a great protection to the individual because when we are conscious of the use of power, or the possession of power, there is the ego and the arrogance associated with it and, very often, that becomes the cause of that person's fall, downfall. Therefore we have this famous aphorism if you like, "Power corrupts and absolute power corrupts absolutely."

So in this lies the greatness of the Sahaj Marg system, that the only thing we use for our self-development is ourselves. We work on ourselves, by ourselves, for ourselves. And what do we use in the process? The mind. Because my Master says that the mind is the cause of human downfall, human failure, human corruption. But it is also the only instrument that we have for our up-going trends. Therefore raja yoga uses the mind.

Now before we start using it, it has to be purified. Because yogic science teaches that everything begins in the mind and from there descends into activity. So we have to purify this process of thinking, and doing, and achieving results, at the source. Therefore raja yoga uses the mind to train itself, to regulate itself. And here the grace of the guru, or the Master, is necessary, because however much we may use the mind, and however we may perfect it, if the human tendencies we have brought into this birth are not changed, then the mind continues to work in the same way as before, only more powerfully now. So one of the fundamental techniques of Sahaj Marg, perhaps the most important, is what we call cleaning. It is my Master's teaching that, by our thoughts and actions of the past, we have created impressions of those thoughts and actions upon ourselves. And when these impressions become very strong they become the cause of action in a similar repetitive pattern, very much like a gramophone record plays the same music again and again.

So, if we have a more trained and regulated mind, but we remain what we are, as far as our inner tendencies and the situation that we have created inside us in the past are concerned, there is no possibility of a qualitative change in us. That is why you have this fascinating, rather not only fascinating, but confusing and intriguing, situation that we can have highly educated criminals, which only proves that education makes a criminal a better criminal.

Education has never produced a saint. I mean, you have only to look to the life of the saints of the past. And I do not think I am wrong in saying, perhaps, not any of them had a good education as we understand it. And most of the mystics, the great saints of the past, they have looked upon education, upon intellection, with considerable suspicion because thousands of years ago they came to this conclusion by experience that, like the engine of a car for instance, if you are going in the wrong direction and you have a more powerful car, you will go faster, but only go in the wrong direction. The power of the car alone is not enough to put you in the right direction.

Similarly, among human beings, all these powers whether of the body, or the mind, or the intellect, they only make it possible for us to pursue the same line of action, or the same line of thought, with greater power, with greater concentration. And, therefore, I repeat there is no qualitative change in the human being. And this is quite apparent to people in the Western societies where today you find the frightening consequences of high-tech education which has been divorced from moral development in the same individuals. And, therefore, we find in the newspapers, in the magazines, the fear expressed again and again, every day, that mankind is facing extinction at its own hands.

You see, there was a time in the past when mankind was threatened by animals, by other things, by other forms of life, by nature. But when the human being of today has this proud claim that we have conquered nature, yes, it is true. But has he conquered his inner nature? Has he changed it, modified it, at least humanized it? Because my Master, in one of his fundamental teachings, has always said that we are, most of us, animals when we are born. Not in the sense of having animal forms, but tendencies such as anger, lust, greed, avarice. And to remove them and to make human beings of us, at least that is the first object of education, or it should be the first object of education.

But I repeat that education has only made the avaricious man more avaricious and given him the capacity to be more avaricious, and to get more and more for himself. It has made the selfish man more selfish in a very polished, very refined, way, in an educated way. The criminals of the old days went about with crowbars and hammers but the modern criminals have high-tech instruments, high-tech communication systems, and perhaps they plan their crimes on a computer. They have become almost perfect criminals.

I remember some ten or twelve years ago there was a major bank robbery in Nice where, under such a busy city, they had managed to dig a tunnel underneath and get into the bank. The human being was the same. This capacity came from education. And of course you have the much more frightening capacities, the atom bomb, the laser gun. All these, you know, traumatic fears from which most humans suffer today. They cannot sleep in peace.

So it is not surprising that the people of the olden times, even in those days, looked with suspicion on education. Unfortunately today education is protecting itself, because the educators are also corrupt in some ways. And a corrupt doctor is protected by his profession. You know the oath of Hippocrates. It does not exist any more. I call it, "The hypocritical oath," and the profession wants to protect its members. The same with engineers, the same with aviation people, every day you find high-paid pilots (I do not know how much they are paid, millions of francs perhaps), every third day they go on strike. They want more and more. And because they have the capacity to stop all transportation, bring chaos into the country, always there is a compromise. Some more is given to them. Costs are increasing. The ticket fares are raised, and you and I, we pay for it. Education has not purified the individual, and prosperity has not made him a better man. Prosperous people are more selfish than ever before. We want more and more.

Some of you may have read Charles Dickens' novel, where a poor boy who is in a school, he is one of these, I do not know what you call them, castaways. And they give him a bowl of gruel as they used to call it, a weak soup created by diluting one bowl of soup to feed twenty boys. And when he had enough courage to ask for some more to eat because he was hungry, he was beaten. And you know, poor people are unable to ask for more. Look at society today. You are able to exploit the weaker sections of society, either pay them less and less or keep them static at one level, and make them work more and more. And those at the higher levels of society, the highest levels of society, they are paid more and more every year just because these people are educated enough to ask for more, to demand for more. So you see, education has not proved of any worth, as far as increasing the substantial value of human beings is concerned. It has only produced more selfish, more corrupt, more greedy, more criminal human beings.

So you see, occasionally of course, there may be a pure man whom education has helped to become purer, more noble, more divine. But, by and large, I personally attribute much of today's evils of society to education. Because, assuming that the moral qualities of the human being have not improved, any degeneration is directly attributable to education, which makes degeneration possible. I only try to put before you the argument of the ancient yogis, of the saints, for their total distrust of education. And they were able to turn away from the way of the brain and the intellect to the only other instrument of evolution which we have, the heart. So you see, it is not only the brain that God has given us, but there is something which we have almost forgotten, the heart.

Today we talk so much of love. And I do not think anybody knows with what they really love. I mean, all sorts of things are used for love today, except the heart. Excuse me for saying it but you all know it is true. Especially in the West, in Europe, you know the ravages that have been caused in the past fifty, sixty years by the relaxation of moral values. Divorce is playing havoc in society where children are being torn apart by so-called loving fathers and mothers. And not only has our level of society been corrupted, I mean, my generation, your generation of society, but we are passing on to our children the bitterness, the insecurity, the cynicism by which they are surrounded in today's so-called homes, families.

So you see, the time has now come for a re-examination of our sense of values to reassess the efficacy of the instruments that we use, and to re-define the goals of our existence. All three are very important. And when you consider the first point which I mentioned, you know, we must also understand that there is always a conflict between the brain and the heart. And as my Master used to point out very often, very frequently, knowledge may lie here, you see, [gesturing to the head] in the brain, in the intellect, but truth is in the heart. And what we lack today is truth. We may tell superficial truths, you see, like telling your correct age, your name, holding a correct passport. But we are like icebergs, where there is one-eighth above and seven-eighths below. Perhaps we have more below and less above. Because all the lies that we tell to ourselves, to our children, to our wives, to our husbands, they are hidden away in the heart. The intellect only being a very convenient instrument for us to formulate those lies and those cheatings.

Now please do not misunderstand that I am here to criticize human beings. I am also one of you. But I would remind you that when you have an affluent society, an industrial society, the base of such a society is selfishness. Prosperity only for France or only for Germany or only for Denmark, you see, and the borders being tightened more and more securely to protect the modern God.

You know, we have a new God today. His name is 'standard of living'. It is very important for us. We cannot do without our mattresses, *matelas*, cushions, fine furniture, air conditioners. What does it matter that hundreds of people die elsewhere to keep one person happy in Europe? I mean, there is no need for me to expand on this discussion, you all know the truth of it. And if any of you is going to tell me that there is going to be a common Europe without frontiers within it, it is only to strengthen this confederation of selfishness and greed and exploitation of the poor.

So you see, this is not a healthy way of living. What is the proof? Well your own doctors, your clinics, the number of heart patients, the number of head patients that you have, the druggists. It is a funny thing, you know, it is a very, what should I say, amusing thing, tragically amusing thing, that the underdeveloped countries of the world produce the drugs which are killing your children of the next generation. And you see, they are sensible enough not to consume it. They know it is dangerous. And we of the great Western nations, intellectualized, industrialized, of a high standard of living, will you permit me to say that we are so stupid we do not know what is good for us? You have only to walk the streets to find out. I think there are very few families where the tragedy of divorce, shattered families, broken hearts, drugged children does not exist. If such a family exists, it is indeed a very lucky and a very blessed one today.

Therefore yoga has also been very suspicious of wealth and acquisition, suspicious of education, suspicious of acquisition. So they always went into the heart because it has been an aspect of human wisdom that, from the beginning of human beings, we have understood that the real quality of a human being is expressed by his or her heart. You all know this. A man may be very intelligent but if he has no heart we say he is a heartless fellow. He may have a PhD in physics, another in chemistry, another in biology but the ultimate comment about a human being is to say, "He, or she, is a heartless human being."

See, we have recognized this in our native wisdom, therefore we look to the heart. And perhaps, I do not know, the doctors have to say, "Why all of a sudden there is so much heart disease in this world?" Is there any connection between moral degradation, loss of the heart in a, I mean, spiritual or emotional sense, and its physical degradation? I remember that when I was young, I rarely heard of heart attacks or heart failures. Why today all of a sudden, you know, in frightening proportions? Also the same thing with cancer. Why? Why are these diseases suddenly coming into human beings? And if you want to know the answer, which you know but you are frightened to say, I am not afraid to say it — morality! And the latest manifestation of our immoral living is AIDS.

Please remember that all the great civilizations of the past, whether it was that of the Middle East or Greece or Rome or Babylon, they all fell when human beings became devils and morality disappeared from the scene. It is perhaps in this sense that you have the Christian tradition of the fall by temptation. It is supposed to have been the first immoral act. I do not know whether it is right or wrong, true or not true, but it is significant, significant enough for you to think over it because society has always fallen because of this.

Therefore you see, coming back to the science of yoga — no power, no intellect, no acquisition. We now have three parameters for the yogi. They shun all powers. I am talking of the true yogis who are after God realisation, not after petty things like, you know, manifesting things and helping you to have success in your love affairs, or get new jobs, things like that. So they shunned power, they shunned knowledge, they shunned wealth. And if you examine this very carefully, you will find, at the root, it is all the same. Wealth is a power. That is what capitalism is about. Knowledge is a power. That is why the man who has education is able to demand and get what he wants. And power, of course, is raw power in its essence. And you have many manifestations, political power, power of weapons, power of instruments.

So we find this fascinating turn away from the material aspect of life. And that was when raja yoga really took hold as a system of spiritual practice. Sahaj Marg is a more refined system of raja yoga because we use the mind, as I said in the beginning, to train the mind. That is, in a sense we train ourselves by using ourselves upon ourselves. So we have to have at least a mind which is capable of doing this in the beginning. Therefore, unfortunately, raja yoga is not available to people of mental aberrations who have no right functioning mind. It is not possible.

Now this may look quite negative to Western people, that we have to live without power and knowledge and wealth. But that was not the intention of the yogis or of my teacher, of my Master. All that yogic practice demands of us is that we remove our attachment to these things. And instead of living for knowledge, or for wealth, or for power, we begin to live for ourselves and try to improve our inner substance, our inner condition, our inner quality, so that a moral stage of perfection can soon be reached when, for such a person, all these things become instruments. Now he is able to use wealth, not for himself but for general good, power for the peoples' elevation, for their evolution, for their good, and education also for their good.

So the self-centredness of the human being becomes, now, a concern for humanity at large. That is why, in the Eastern traditions, power is entrusted only to the morally perfect person. But now you find that anybody, you know, who looks big and strong is given power. And if he is educated, they think he is an even fitter person to use power. And then we find that they go about running around with guns, shooting people and good people are murdered by them, and even children. Even in yesterday's newspaper I read that, in America, a man suddenly took his gun and killed six or seven people. Of course, the psychologists will try to explain it in so many ways, and maybe they are right. Maybe! But it does not bring back to life again the seven dead people.

But you have the holy cow of standard of living, and the American wants his gun. There are no gun laws in America, at least no effective gun laws. And then we must remember the old saying, "He who lives by the sword shall die by the sword." Not will, shall! And you have only to read the newspapers to find out the truth of this. Rich people die because of their wealth. Powerful people die because of their power. A beautiful woman suffers because of her beauty. Very few beautiful women have really lived a happy life, because that is also a power, the power of beauty.

So what is it that we are aspiring for when we have all these things, when we use cosmetics, want to look more beautiful? We are only trying to become more and more miserable. One of my earlier gurus before my present Master, he used to tell me as a joke, "If you are rich, you attract thieves. If you are powerful, you attract criminals. If you are beautiful, you attract only those who have nothing but lust in them." And I asked him why it should be so. He smiled and said, "When you drop honey on your table, it is only insects which come for it."

See, this is the truth of all power, whether it is in the form of money, or wealth, or intellect, or beauty, or anything else. It always attracts something from the lower levels, never something from the higher levels. So therefore this great argument of raja yoga, "Forget these things." If you have the unfortunate destiny to be rich, or the unfortunate destiny to be a beautiful woman, or to be born in a powerful family as a king, I do not know what else, set it aside.

You know, I was fascinated when I used to be a school boy, when the reigning monarch of England gave up his throne for the love of a woman. I mean, for a king to give up a throne for a mere woman — that is what I thought, you see, 'mere woman' at that time. I mean, logic says he could have had any number of beautiful women. Does a king have to ask? Yet he was able to give up a throne of the, then, most powerful empire on this earth, the British Empire. That is the power of love. Why do I give you this example? To show to you that love renounces, not takes. He gave up for the love of a woman. The great saints, the great rishis, the great mystics, they gave up the whole existence for something we never see, we never feel, we never touch — **God**.

So you see, the power of love is such that the highest possible renunciation becomes possible through it. Money can only help you to make more money. It cannot give you happiness. It cannot give you moral values. That is why tradition always speaks of rich men having to give up their wealth. And these wise people, they instinctively understood this. Therefore my Master called this Sahaj Marg system **the way of the heart.** We recognize that we need a brain, we need a stomach, we need all the other things that we have, you see, but only to help us to reach our goal. In fact, it is the saying of all the great mystics that, "Life itself is to be considered as a sort of a vehicle to take us to the higher aspects of living." And if that purpose is not fulfilled we remain here until it is fulfilled.

See, here is the great difference between the Indian tradition and the other traditions. In the Sahaj Marg tradition there is no punishment and reward. There is no virtue. There is no vice. You may be surprised when I say this, after talking for half an hour about moral values but, according to my Master, morality is that which keeps pushing me up. See, this superficial morality of not taking somebody's money, or not stealing somebody's wife, it is very superficial. It was a crime when one man did it with one woman. But when everybody is doing it today, it has become natural.

There used to be a time, when I was a boy, when if a man and a woman were going together, and if you asked them, "Are you married?" you would probably get a beating. Today if you ask them, [he chuckles] "Are you unmarried?", well the answer is more or less always, "Yes." Now we have lulled ourselves into a sense of false security, false social acceptance, by thinking that something which everybody does must be right. Normally it is always wrong. Because if you study human history, human development through the centuries, the good, the noble, the right, has always been the performance of a few people at the top from the elite sections of society, not the social elite, but the moral elite. So the argument that, "Everybody is doing it. What can I do?" does not make something wrong into something right.

Now yoga says, my Master says, "To correct this way of living, this calamitous situation, the heartbreaking society today, change cannot be brought by legislation or by preaching." It is not necessary to tell you that governments have failed, the church has also failed. Because both have not been able to touch the heart of the human beings. And unless there is a change of heart, and change in what the heart says is right, and our willingness to accept that voice from the heart, we are like automobiles going downhill faster and faster. We can only crash. The change of direction must come only by refining the tendencies of the heart, by purifying the heart, and this is what we are attempting to do in our yogic technique of Sahaj Marg, recognizing that the voice which was inside the heart, known as the conscience, has virtually ceased to exist. Fortunately it is still there but so weak that we cannot hear it. Because the more you disregard it and push it back, the more it subsides.

Now the only way of bringing it out again into the open and making it an effective instrument for guiding our life is to purify the heart, listen more and more to it, and guide your lives by the way the heart wants you to go. It is, at least in the beginning, a frightening prospect. To me it was. I am sure it will be much more frightening to you. Because it first demands that you recognize the truth of your present existence. It does not need any confession before God or in church. Nor does it make it necessary to flagellate yourselves, inflict pain upon yourselves. Because no amount of physical chastisement can correct your heart. Otherwise all our prisons would have turned out saints. But it is a well-known fact that when a man goes to prison, he comes out worse than when he went into it. But the truth has to be faced. And why most people are afraid is they think immediately they have to give away their money, throw away their good clothes, sell their car, all sorts of funny things.

How long does it take you to correct the direction of your car if you are going in the wrong direction? How long does it take you to correct it? A few minutes. You do not have to get out of your car even. In fact, if you got out of your car, you could not change the direction of the car. You have to be in it, recognize that you are wrong, and use the power of that car to change direction and take you on to your destination. That is all that is demanded of you in the yogic life, too. And until you know you are in the wrong direction, you cannot change direction.

This need to accept that we are going wrong is of paramount importance. Because so long as you think you are right, even God cannot change you. And God is not necessary. We do not call God to change the direction of our cars. We can do it ourselves. Here, too, it is possible for us to do it ourselves. And to be able to do it is what we try to teach in our yogic system.

So we start with meditation on the heart, giving the heart its fundamental important place in our existence. And by meditating on the divine essence in that heart in the form of illumination, assisted by the guru or the Master, we are able to turn our attention more and more inwards, more and more towards the heart, until, eventually, it becomes the guiding factor of our existence. The purpose of the heart becomes the purpose of existence. And then we have this miraculous transformation that life begins to have a purpose, a purpose which we feel with the heart. Now love begins to come into our life, not this artificial so-called love of society today, but real **true love** which **gives** without demanding. This is the truth of love. When love demands, it is no longer love. It is a sham. It is the ultimate hypocrisy. It is as bad as a rich man asking for more money, powerful nations wanting more and more power. They are not happy with their atom bombs and with their neutron bombs, they want Star Wars programmes. Absolute corruption.

All stemming from the corruption of the heart. "My existence is vital. I must live happily. I must be rich. I must have the big mansions of this world. Let everybody else go to the devil." Now those of us who have undertaken this rather difficult path, in the beginning, you see, it is very difficult in the beginning, I can absolutely testify to it. Not because the path is difficult, but because our **fear** makes it difficult. You know, I have been living in Courmettes for the last two months. And there is a small hill behind us, really small, a few hundred metres. It is nothing. But I am so afraid of mountains that I have not been able to climb it. But when some of my younger friends say, "Oh, come on! You should be able to do this," I have been able to do a little more every day. And here is the amazing but very natural, very truthful, fact that the more you do of something, the more you are able to do of that same thing. It is only the beginning which is difficult.

In America they have a rather cynical statement. They say, "The first million is difficult. After that, the million makes the next million." No longer are you necessary there, the money makes itself. It is true. It is true because rich people have nothing to do, things run by themselves. Therefore they start more industries, more corrupt organizations, bigger organizations which run by themselves. And to spend their enormous wealth and their useless time there are places like Cannes and Monaco which exist to take the rich man's money from him. You know that old English proverb, "A fool and his money are easily parted." So they have to make more money. Because where you would spend five francs, they spend five thousand francs. So for every franc they spend they have to make ten more. Now imagine their situation. Therefore drugs, alcohol, women, I mean it goes on multiplying. So this is what the power structure does, education structure does, acquisitive society does for us.

But when we meditate and the heart begins to become important in our existence and to become, eventually, **the** existence itself, then we find, you know, that a very amazing thing happens. We are now able to give without fear. Please understand this very clearly. Now we are able to take without fear, then comes a situation where we can **give** without fear. Giving is not easy. And the more rich we are, the more difficult it is. A poor man knows he can live without nothing. He knows to get his half a *baguette* and a little bit of cheese, it does not take much. But for a rich man his wealth is the reservoir of his happiness, of his security, and every time he gives from it he thinks his security is reduced and his future is threatened. So this change in the human character that, from taking without fear to giving without fear, is a very important, a major turning point in our life. They are no longer afraid because they know that by giving you develop more people, you raise society. And when you raise society, you rise with it. So you see, it is not only the individual who grows but he contributes to the growth of society.

Again, at the risk of being over-repetitive, please remember the rich, the powerful, degrade society. The moral, the uplifted, the saintly, the ethical, they upgrade society. So this is the great purpose of yoga in human life. I have to say this because very often people think, "They are only doing it for themselves and is it not selfish?" The selfishness ceases to exist when you think that such a person alone can give. He is able to give love without fear, without judgement of the person to whom he is giving it, and without any consideration or any condition being imposed. It is a **free** gift, you see. He has, he gives. Therefore the recipient must respond.

And here you find that one who receives from such a person feels blessed, feels loved, feels wanted, trusted, needed. And this itself begins to melt the heart of the recipient. And imagine the effect of such a person in society. Therefore people come in larger and larger numbers. If a Christ was followed by thousands of people it was for this reason. He did not distribute money. He did not distribute power. He distributed hope in what is today a hopeless world, almost. If a Buddha was followed by thousands of people it was for the same reason. It is the truth with all great saints and mystics. Because where there is no love, there is no hope. A loveless life is a hopeless life. And the extreme manifestation of that hopelessness is suicide. Of course, you generally pass through drug addiction, alcoholism, so many things in between.

Therefore by pursuing the path of yoga we bring hope back into our lives. We bring love back into our lives. Not because somebody else loves us, but because by changing ourselves we begin to love ourselves. Now suicide is the ultimate expression of self-hatred. But when you begin to love yourself, you can love everything that you see. Like a happy man finds happiness in all faces, whereas a sad person seems to find everybody sad. This is the great spiritual truth, that we see in nature what is inside us. So when we bring hope and love back into our existence, into our hearts, it automatically spreads to all humanity and they begin to hope and to love. And such a person is able to change society in very radical ways, and in such a fashion that even the great governments of the past have been shaken by them.

You know the effect that Christ's teachings had on the Roman Empire. Forget the lepers and the people whom he helped. It is said that his teaching was the direct cause of the major slave rebellions. It is for this reason that many governments, even today, suspect such activities. But that is not our concern, you see. They have to do what they have to do. We have to do what we have to do. And in any case, we cannot continue, or afford to continue, to exist as we do. And I request all of you to consider this seriously. Think about it and understand that without a change in the direction of our lives, nothing is possible. We are only going to grow in the same direction which we have already got. And, at least as far as the industrialized high-tech nations are concerned, it is a collision course with disaster and annihilation.

So yoga brings back not only hope and love but the promise of life itself. Because when you live in a society where a Chernobyl can happen or something else can happen, people are afraid to touch the grass, drink the milk, take the cheese which comes from those places. Where children are afraid of going out and the mothers are afraid of sending their children out because today, for a girl, child rape is the least possible thing, I mean, the least dangerous thing. They can be abducted, sold into slavery. And you are afraid to get into a plane because it can be hijacked, or some stupid government might shoot down a civilian airliner. That is why, today, drugs are selling so much. Sleeping pills are necessary. The tranquilizer market is so big. And excuse me for saying it, even our mattresses have to be so soft. Because when we are fearless and we have hope, sleep comes naturally. Today we are spending vast amounts of money on trying to sleep.

So, in conclusion, I would like to thank you all for coming to listen to this talk. It is only our endeavour to try to recreate in you the spark of personal interest in your own life, try to awaken in your heart the need to revive it, the need to awaken it, bring love into your lives and spread that love to everybody.

Thank you for your patience. [applause]

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The Heart as the Instrument of Realisation.

Montpellier, France
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I am here to speak to you about the announced subject, the heart as the instrument of realisation. It is comparatively new, because yoga has traditionally been associated with other techniques and other systems of the human organization, for instance, with the spinal cord, with the chakras along the spine, and hatha yoga has made this very popular. *Kundalini*, for instance, everybody knows. And today we find in Europe a great number of yoga centres, all of which deal mainly with hatha yoga, at least that is what I have found. There may be others. I do not know. And I would like to start by clarifying what yoga really means. Yoga means union. It comes from the old Sanskrit root *yuj,* like, you know, in French you say 'y', 'u' and 'j'. So it is essentially from this word that you get the English word yoke, to bring together. And in the old tradition, in the yogic tradition, yoga always meant only one union, union with God. It had nothing to do with any lesser unions.

Now I do not know what the present-day context for yoga is because, even in India, there are many yoga schools, so-called, which teach everything except this union with God. Hatha yoga is the most popular because it gives some support to the craving for power, which all human beings have. It also aids in things like, you know, the perfect body. Not muscular in the Greek sense, but what they thought as a balanced body, you see, and a well-developed psychic system and a perfect nervous system and, by the adjunctive process of *pranayama*, the inner psychic system was supposed to be purified, strengthened. And after all that was done, they said you could create a new life in the *kundalini*, raise it, acquiring enormous power. But much, I think, was missed in the process. Of course, hatha yoga, if properly practised, can certainly give enormous powers, in fact unimaginable powers. It is said that a hatha yogi can move worlds, throw planets out of orbit, things like that. And there have been great yogis in the past who have performed many miracles of such a nature. And therefore hatha yoga has been very prominent in the yogic tradition. But I think, unfortunately in the process, the main aspect of yoga as something leading to divinisation of the human person has been lost.

I repeat, this problem is very big in India too, not because people do not know what they should aspire for, but because the temptation to power, to glory, is so big. And I am sure you have all seen photographs of these so-called yogis lying on beds of nails, walking on fire, so many things. I repeat, it can give you tremendous powers, but is it going to lead you to realisation? So this is a question we should ask before we start a practice of yoga. Try to understand what we are looking for, because we cannot blame anybody if we do not know what we are looking for.

I think the great revolution in the yogic techniques came about sometime in the ninth century, or the tenth century, when what is called the *bhakti* cult came into being. The idea that God should be not looked for, or sought for, power and things like that, but God should be sought with love. That is why it is called *bhakti*. A *bhakta* is one who loves God, loves Him absolutely, loves only God. Now do not be afraid when I use the word only, because it does not exclude our normal human, shall we say, family life, social life. Because the *bhakti* path very definitely states that our love **belongs** to God.

It is not a question of our loving God, you see, because He is the Creator. He is the Father, we are His children. The temporal, the worldly love is a sort of a duty. In fact it goes, shall I say, very deep into the subject and says your heart should be given only to Him, though you can love here. And we have certain very great personalities of the *bhakti marga* as we call it, the way of *bhakti*. And I am sure some of you have heard their names, Ramanuja, Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, people like that. Now it is a funny thing that, because it is the way of love, it has tended to remain closed. Because, in the Eastern tradition, one does not talk about love, one does not broadcast one's love. It is supposed to be a secret of the heart between the lover and the beloved.

That is why not much is known about this *bhakti* business outside India. Because if you take the great figures who came out of India and preached about Indian religion, Hinduism, they invariably spoke of *vedanta* and that is a religious intellectual tradition, the greatest architect of which was called Shankara. Shankara's philosophy is well known. It is often said that he was, perhaps, the greatest intellectual ever born in India. People forget that Swami Vivekananda was there much later, in our own times. And even though Swami Vivekananda achieved what he achieved by raja yoga, the way of meditation, because his master Shri Ramakrishna started life as a priest in a temple, worshipped Kali the divine mother, there is a certain obscurity between the two paths. And it is assumed that Swami Vivekananda became a great saint because of his intellect. On the contrary. If you remember Ramakrishna's life, he was a temple priest. But by ascetic practices he had gained inner enlightenment and enormous powers. It is said he was able to bring the divine mother into his presence and speak to her, play with her, talk to her. He was very happy with that, very content. But one day a yogi came and said, "What is this play that you are indulging in? Is this all that you want? Even a goddess, to play with her is of no use, it is not going to give you realisation." Ramakrishna was humble enough to say, "I do not know what more to do." And, it is said, this master of yoga took a bit of glass and hit him on the forehead and said, "Meditate on this point." It was only after that that Ramakrishna Paramahamsa was able to meditate, was able to achieve the highest states, which gave him the title of Paramahamsa. Before that he was also doing the traditional hatha yogic practices of *asana*, *pranayama* and things like that.

Now there is a mistaken assumption that we have to follow the eight steps of yoga, one after the other. It has proved a very tragic assumption in many cases. I think it is an unfortunate concomitant of our sequential logic, that two must come after one, three must come after two, four must come after three, and so on, that most practitioners of yoga in the West think they have to start with hatha yoga. Now please believe me, this is a total misconception because in raja yoga whatever has to be done we have to do with the mind, and the minimum physical health is all that is necessary. We must be healthy enough to be able to sit and meditate. That is all. But there are two things. The fascination for the development of the body, development of powers, and this misconception that we have to start with step one, go to step two, go to step three.

I remember, I visited one of the ashrams of one of the great Indian organizations with connections in France. I met an old lady there about forty-five or fifty years old. This was twenty years back. I had come with my spiritual Master, Shri Ram Chandraji Maharaj. He was talking with the head of the ashram and I was walking in the garden, because maybe they were having a private talk, I do not know. I met this old lady and we started talking. I told her I meditate and I asked her, "How much do you meditate?" She said, "I have not started meditation yet." I asked her, "How long have you been here?" under that particular system, you see. She said, "Twenty-three years." I said, "What have you been doing these twenty-three years?" "Oh," she said, "my guru told me we need a lot of preparation before we can meditate. So I spent three years in the kitchen cutting vegetables, three years in the washing room washing clothes, three years in the infirmary with patients and, after all that, now I am doing gardening work to teach me patience." I asked, "When will you start meditation?" She said, "When my guru permits." See, this is a very tragic thing; and when I told my Master about it, he was not only extremely surprised, he was anguished to see how people are being misled.

The fundamental thing is that, to train the mind, you do not have to train the body. Imagine education. You can have the highest education with even a sick body. Recently, you must have seen a book, published in America, written by Stephen Hawking. He is confined to a wheelchair. He can move only two fingers of his hand. In his wheelchair there is a computer. Everything is specially made for him. And with that he conducts classes for PhD students, doctorate students at the University of London. He has written many books and he is hailed as a person who will perhaps unite the theories of Einstein and Newton in one grand synthesis. He is a cripple, you see, suffering from what is called Lou Gehrig's disease. Lou Gehrig, you know, the famous baseball player, had a disease which became known as Lou Gehrig's disease. So if such a man confined to a wheelchair, who can operate only a few finger tips, can write books, teach science classes at the highest level, it is very clear that the body has nothing to do with the mind.

On the contrary, it is the mind which makes use of the body, because even to use those few fingers that he is able to move, it is with the strength of his will, the power of his mind, that he is able to do it. You must remember the old Latin formula, *Mens sana in corpore sano*. So you see the whole exercise is a futile exercise. And that is what my Master taught that we should, "Begin straight with meditation." So here we come back to the old Indian tradition of raja yoga, which has been there for thousands of years. The last three stages of what is called Patanjali's *ashthanga* yoga: *dharana*, *dhyana*, and *samadhi*. All the rest is preparation. A preparation which may be necessary for some but not for all. If you are normal and if you desire to practise meditation, well, now is the time to begin.

What is the difference between, shall we say, the traditional raja yoga and what my Master teaches as the Sahaj Marg brand of raja yoga? Now I come to three major divisions of the Indian development, as I see it. I have not seen it in any books. The first is the yogic tradition where the body was used, the spinal column was used, the chakras were used, starting with the *muladhara, swadishtana*, going up to the *sahasrarara* chakra at the top of the head, you see, the thousand-petal lotus as it is called. It includes *asanas*. It is said there are one hundred and eight of them. It includes *pranayama* (breathing) where you have to breathe out, hold out the breath, breathe in, hold in the breath — four steps. The *asanas* and *pranayama* are the fundamental aspects of what we today call hatha yoga. Then came the tradition of using the mind. The mind is supposed to be the ruler of the whole system. In India it is called raja, the king, you see, the ruler. Therefore the system which used the mind became known as raja yoga. It is very simple. Initially, it was a big mixture of hatha yoga, raja yoga, *pranayama*, everything. But

I think, subsequent to the development of the *bhakti* path there was a tendency among raja yogis, that is the practitioners of raja yoga, to progressively move away from the emphasis on the body and its parts until you come to a refined state where you just sit in a comfortable pose, which you can maintain for the period of your meditation, and start meditating.

See, it is a funny thing that in Patanjali's book, *The Yoga Sutras*, an *asana* is defined as something you can hold comfortably for a particular time. In Sanskrit it is *sthiram sukam asanam* — just three words. All the rest is a later development. And they came, as I told you earlier, to develop certain parts of the body, certain systems of the human organization. And if you read any standard textbook on hatha yoga, you will find them there. Exercises for the spine, like for instance the *bhujanga asana* and the *salabha asana*, you see. *Bhujanga asana* is the serpent pose, where you lie flat on your face and raise the upper part of your body. The *salabha asana* is the reverse, where you keep your face down and lift your legs up like this. It is a scorpion pose. And the third one where you raise both, bring your arms behind, grasp your feet, and you bend like a bow which is called *dhanura asana*, the bow pose. Very specific for the spine. Like that, we have *mayura asana* where you put your elbows into your stomach, for instance, and rest the whole body on the two palms of your hands. It is called the peacock pose. In this pose the elbows are supposed to massage your visceral organs and give you inner health. I mean, this is all in the books. Most of you must have read them.

So with the people, who were really interested in spiritual development, no longer interested in the powers of the body, or even the mind, they came to the pure form of raja yoga, meditation and nothing else. That is the second stream. Then I believe with Shankara, Ramanuja and people like that, the third stream comes. I request you to think of it like a tree, you see, from the trunk, the main tree of yoga. The first branch hatha yoga. Then the second one raja yoga and the third, which, perhaps, is the final one, I do not know, because who can predict what will happen in the future, brings into focus the heart. For them, the mind is of no more any use, because they came to a grand recognition of this important fact, that the mind is as much an adjunct of the human system as the body. And one needs to regulate the function of the mind so that its thoughts are pure, so that subsequent actions are pure, so that subsequent results are pure. The emphasis was always on purity. Modern emphasis is on effectivity, efficiency. Sometimes one wonders whether in the process, purity has not been lost sight of. Because today you find this hiatus even in science, that the magnificent scientific research of this century and the previous century has created what many people in the West have called 'horrors of science'. And the most glaring examples, of course, are the various types of bombs. So much so, that the human being is sometimes characterized by scientists, and by philosophers alike, as the only life form which has created enormous potential for destroying itself. That is why, in India, we pay very special attention to the purification of the mind, not so much to the education of the mind. It is recognized that education gives fantastic powers, but if there is no purity to back those powers, we end up with criminal tendencies, criminal minds.

Please remember that it takes much more intelligence to be a criminal than to be an honest man. And the modern criminals are highly educated criminals. They are able to use the technological resources of modern Europe with extreme finesse and accuracy. So that is where the intellect has taken us when it is without purity. See, modern technology is like a ship sailing without a compass or a rudder. So this is the old tradition, you see, that power requires a direction to its usage. And in the hands of a pure person, power, whether of the body or the mind or of science, they are all very safe. They are safe and can be used for human development, human growth, human happiness. Therefore there is always a suspicion in yoga, among yogic people, about intelligence. They would rather prefer wisdom. The two are not the same. So that was the second grand phase.

The third grand phase is where we come to the heart. We forget the mind. We use the mind only to a certain extent. We do not totally forget it. We use it for a limited purpose. In meditation, we use the mind to purify itself, refine itself, regulate itself. That is why it is, sometimes, very difficult to understand how we can possibly meditate and achieve all these things. Because it is using the mind itself to work on itself, to purify and refine itself. In the beginning it looks very confusing, but we must remember that is how everything is done. We use a weak body to make it stronger by exercise. We use a weak intellect to work upon itself, to strengthen it until it becomes a magnificent intellect. So there is really no problem in using the mind itself to refine itself, to purify itself, to regulate itself.

And in raja yoga, as taught by my Masters, which is a continuation of the famous traditions of Ramanuja and Kabir especially, you see, the emphasis shifts to the heart. And now there is no more tension, no more exercising. You just try to bring the divine presence into the heart, or rather to realise its presence there.

So meditation shifts from points (like the point between the eyebrows, the point of the nose, they are the traditional points of meditation), to meditation on the heart. And it is a funny thing, if you study the life of the old rishis of India, they are supposed to have meditated on these points for thousands of years, somehow. And their meditation was so successful that they could bring the god on whom they meditated in their presence. They could ask for anything, the highest being the power of that divinity. And they got it. And tradition says they destroyed themselves with those powers.

There is a famous story, if you have the time. I do not know whether I should tell you a short story. One of the *asuras* as they are called, he meditated for a thousand years upon Shiva. Shiva came eventually and asked, "What do you want? I must reward your *tapas*," as it is called. He said, "Anybody on whose head I put my hand, he must be instantly burnt to ashes." Now here is a funny situation, you see, because these gods have no capacity to refuse these powers. Shiva said, "So be it." And the story goes that this *asura* wanted to test the power on Shiva himself. And he wanted to put his hand on him. Shiva had to run. Eventually he went up to Vishnu, the god who protects. And Vishnu said, "Why were you such a fool to give him this power?" He said, "What can I do? When somebody meditates with that enormous devotion and ability and calls me into his presence, even you cannot refuse." So Vishnu changed himself into a most fascinatingly beautiful girl, and this fellow who was running after Shiva, his attention was diverted to this girl. He told the girl, "I desire you." She said, "Yes, but first you must undergo the purificatory ritual. Have a bath in this river and then do the ritual purification, and I will be yours." He went through all this process and at one stage, you know, in the purification ritual, you have to put your hand on your head and repeat a mantra. When he put his hand on his head he destroyed himself.

So that is why, you see, powers are very dangerous things. And you know the old saying, "Power corrupts. Absolute power corrupts absolutely." So these great *bhakti* yogis, they gave up the powers of the body, they abandoned the powers of the mind, and came to the only pure thing in the, what they said is the whole universe — the heart. And there are many reasons for this, because my Master has said, "It is the heart which is the vessel in which life exists." If the heart stops, everything stops. It is where circulation starts from and ends. And in all traditions, the divine presence is put in the heart. If God is anywhere, He is in the heart. So all mystic traditions speak of the heart, you see, and human beings describe each other by the heart too: she has a golden heart; he has a heart of steel; he has a kind heart; he has a cold heart. Everything is described by the heart. So recognizing this, that the presence of God is in the heart, and that all other extant systems, until then, can only give you powers, unimaginable powers perhaps, but only powers, this tradition of the heart just brushed away everything else. They brushed away yogic practices. They brushed away mental practices and all the old inhibitions like celibacy, having to leave the family and go to the jungle and meditate. All that was abandoned. Because as my Master once said in Europe, "God is not a fool to create two sexes if they are not necessary."

Creation has a purpose. And everything in the human system has its purpose. But to avoid misuse, if you go in the opposite direction of not using it at all, it is also a disease. So this *bhakti* system emphasizes the right natural use of everything. Therefore there is no asceticism involved, no renunciation, no running away from life and its responsibilities. On the contrary, they were all people who married, who raised families, and yet achieved the divine status which, I repeat, few people in the old yogic tradition are said to have achieved. And this system of using the heart has been more refined by my Masters, and today we meditate on the heart. That is why I suggested, you see, that the heart is the instrument of human realisation. My Master always said, "Whenever you are in doubt about anything, refer to the heart. Because the mind or the intellect is only something like a computer. It gives you answers. Maybe they are right answers, but they may not be right for you." See, suppose a poor man asks a question of his computer, it will give the response that he has programmed into it. "Should I rob a bank?" It can say, "Why not?" "How to rob?" It can give you all the parameters that you have to attend to. That is why we find that people who are developed intellectually are not necessarily moral or even ethical persons. Otherwise education should have made us all saints long ago.

So we bring back this old system of the heart. And as my Master said, "When in doubt, refer to the heart." Nowadays it is very difficult to get an answer, because my Master used to smile and say, "That voice is almost totally still." We do not want to consult it because, in most cases, we know what it is going to say, and the heart is only going to confirm it. That is the problem of the conscience, you see, the conscience is here in the heart, not in the head.

So the modern human being, anywhere, it does not matter whether he is in Europe, India, Africa, anywhere, he is afraid of the heart. I personally believe that most of the modern heart diseases are because of this. We attend to it physically, cholesterol-free diets, fat-free diets but what about the thing that should be there? What makes a heart a heart? Not the physical organ. What makes the brain a brain? Right function, proper function when we need it. Therefore when the brain is deranged and the man has to take psychiatric assistance, the brain is still there, but it is of no use. So, in some sense, we have made the heart also something useless, nowadays. And if you permit me to liken this to social living today, perhaps, the inability to love and to be loved is because of this. In today's love, everything is there except the heart. And that is why there is so much tragedy, broken families, disappointment, disenchantments. So you see the need to bring back the heart into the main focus of the life stream! It may not give us degrees in science or arts. It may not make us millionaires, or even powerful, but it will make us healthy, happy, wise people. Forget realisation. That comes much later. Until a human being has learned to trust his or her heart and to ask of the heart the essential questions of life, I beg your permission to say, we are only like robots, you see, run by a brain. And the parallel is in our factories, in our *usines* today where everything is robot-controlled, you know, computer-controlled.

What is the difference between us and those machines? There a man-made computer runs the machines, and here we have converted our brain into a computer and allowed it to run ourselves, too. As my Master always said, "The mind should be our servant but we have become the servants of our mind." It is like a horse riding its rider. As my Master used to say, "The mind is a wonderful instrument. But remember, it makes a very bad master but a wonderful servant."

So bring the mind back into his proper situation in the hierarchy of the human existence. Use the mind, do not allow the mind to use you. This is very simple. All habits are like this, fixations. Everything which we do not want to do, but which we feel compelled to do, is because we have handed over the control to the mind. So my Master used to say, and it is one of his most important statements, "Even though we are born with the human organization, most of us do not have the human tendencies. We have lost the idea of love, compassion, charity and humanity, and they have been replaced by violence, cruelty, selfishness, greed, lust. You see what a situation we have created for ourselves. And it is not education which is at fault, it is not society which is at fault. It is our own lethargy and our unfortunate misunderstanding that a material life can give us happiness. If that assumption is true, happiness should be found only in Europe and America, while the rest of the world should be miserable."

It is a funny thing that the people of the poor countries are very happy, whereas it is the people in these highly developed high-tech industrialized societies where you find the highest drug rates, highest suicides. I do not have to tell you about this. You know it. And the old, it is now quite old, the hippie movement, the flower children as they called themselves, was a revulsion against this material society. And you all know the names of those famous children of the big millionaires and billionaires who committed suicide. Why did they commit suicide? They had come to a stage where they could not face themselves. So you see, my Master said, "Yes, the heart is the instrument of realisation. But first bring the heart into what it should be, not just a pump which circulates your blood, not just a fist-sized bit of muscle in your body, but the location, not only of divinity, but of the most important constituent of human existence, love."

So in our system we work on the heart. We meditate on the heart. We try to purify it and bring divinity into it, bring back into existence all the lost virtues of the heart, the values of the heart, the powers of the heart. And as my Master was always saying, the first visible sign of this is when a human being becomes really a human being, not a biped parading around in well-tailored clothes with degrees to his name and a good apartment to live in, good food to eat. Those are, you know, external symbols of material wealth often carrying a very, very sad and diseased conscience behind it. I remember the old saying about kings, "Uneasy lies the head that wears a crown," because of the enormous responsibility they had for a whole people, for a whole country. But today's humans cannot sleep, not because of their responsibilities but because of the cry of the heart, which they refuse to listen to, you see, this struggle with ourselves. The heart says, "My dear friend, at least now listen to me. It is night, there is no other noise," and we try to stifle this war by taking drugs, by sleeping pills, when all that is necessary is to sit and say, "Yes, now tell me what I should do. What have I done wrong? How should I correct it?"

But we are afraid of taking this step, you see, because unfortunately, everything we have done wrong, we have **knowingly** done wrong. It is a fact of human conscience that we never feel guilty for anything which we have done wrong unknowingly. The idea of culpability comes only because we know it is wrong, and not because Moses gave the ten commandments, or some church says it or some temple says it. Guilt comes because I say to myself, "Beware, you are going to lose yourself." You can lose the whole world, you see, but if you lose yourself, where are you going? Who is going? This is the chronic symptom of, you know, the malady of the brain, nowadays. First, we tell lies to ourselves. Then they start with alcohol, drugs, you know, all these things. All to enable us to go into that silence from which we need not come out again. And the end, of course, is suicide. So you see, what a tragic thing, that just by subduing the heart, by making it silent, we have literally killed ourselves. And we walk about, as they say in Haiti, you know, zombies, no longer masters of ourselves, but under the compulsion of something which we cannot control — addicts. No, no, not only drug addicts, it is addiction to wealth, addiction to knowledge, addiction to anything.

And I would request you to remember that famous temptation of Jesus Christ when the Devil came and offered him anything he wanted. It is a funny situation, when God never offers anything, but the Devil offers anything you want, anything, anywhere, at any time. And that famous statement of Jesus Christ, "What shall it profit a man if he gains the whole world but loses his own soul?" So we should not run away from these quotations just because it is belonging to religion. If it is the truth, we must accept. Even when a child talks the truth, we must accept. As they say in India, "Even if a horse speaks the truth, we must accept." Truth is truth, and we recognize it. We get angry because we do not want to recognize it. Who wants to accept that we are miserable, we are unfortunate, we are stupid, we are dirty, all because we chose to be like that? So we try to defend ourselves and put the blame on everybody else, including religion, including God. That is why today you find that there are more temples, more churches, but less people in them. Not because, as most of my Western friends tell me, that they do not believe in God. I suspect they believe in Him too much, but they would prefer Him to be where He is and ourselves to be where we are. Otherwise it is difficult, you know, because He is here. He is the voice of my conscience. He is that in me which gives me the capacity to love, to express myself. And if I allow Him to come into my field of consciousness, of awareness, the situation is like a telephone which rings, you know, but very often we do not want to attend to it.

The modern invention of the answering machine is a classical example. It is a heartless machine which you can ignore, which you can listen to at your convenience, and to which you can respond selectively at your desire. Whereas if you lifted the machine when it rings and you listened to the voice at the other end, you are already committed. Even to say, "No," it is a commitment because you are possibly sacrificing your name, your reputation, your friendship. So I often think of this answering machine attached to the telephone instrument, you see, as an instrument of our culpability, a convenience to be used for our convenience, never for the other man's convenience, forgetting the fact that if I am a doctor and I get a telephone call, it may be from somebody who is dying. But it is precisely because I do not want to know it that I use this very convenient machine.

Now if that is the truth of human intercourse, what about **this** telephone? [pointing to the heart] It has no circuit. It has no batteries. It is always there. But God is kind, God is love. You see, a friend may telephone you three times but, not getting a response, he will come to your house. Not God. Where will He come from? Where will He go to? He prefers to remain silent, knowing absolutely that the time will come when you **have** to go to Him again. Every human being faces such a situation, whether he is an atheist or a believer in God. There are moments when your child is dying, or your wife is dying, or you have lost your business, in the secret of your bedroom at midnight you weep and think of God, even if it is only to curse Him. Then this voice starts speaking again. It says "Aha! You still remember I am here." And you say, "Thank God you are there." Now you must please start listening to it more.

Bhakti yoga only says, "Do not wait till that desperate moment comes." Otherwise it is like a ship owner trying to repair the ship when it has started leaking in mid-ocean. Do it before you commence the voyage. So this is the simple logic of trying to meditate, trying to become human beings, then trying to become perfect human beings, ultimately ending up as divinised human beings, not to get something. Because as the old saying goes, "He who has God has everything."

It is like a man who has a wife, he has her, her jewelry, her property, everything is his. Your children think everything is theirs. You ask this child whose house this is, it will say, "My house." Not my father's house or my mother's house, "My house." Whose toy is this? "My toy." And when I have the ability to say, "This is my God," not in the way of religion, you see, that your god and my god are different gods, but with the faith that He is mine because He is inside me. And He is me. He is controlling me. He is making me move, live, exist. Now what can such a person lack? You know, if you have the privilege to be the friend of an emperor and you go for a holiday with him, can he deny you anything which he has himself? You eat like him. You live like him. Every comfort that he has is yours, merely by being the friend of an emperor. Every friend of a rich man knows this. That is why we like to be invited to rich people's parties. They have a good chef, the best wine cellar and we are assured of the best because what he eats, he gives to us. How can it be different when God is yours? Everything He has must be mine.

So this is the wisdom of seeking God, and not the lesser things of His creation. And whereas the old yogic traditions gave you enormous power, enormous vitality, strength unimaginable, unsurpassable beauty, sweetness of voice. I mean, if you read the hatha yoga textbooks you will find all this enumerated, page after page. But when they died, they were here, back, you see. All this and nothing. It is the fate of all the great powerful monarchs of this world, the great philosophers of this world. But the only exceptions are the saints. Because as the mystic tradition says, "Their wealth was not such as could be stolen, or left behind, or lost, because it was inside."

That is why, you know, even at the risk of repeating Christianity again to you, Christ said, "My kingdom is not of this world." It was a very direct statement. "Do not think that by coming to me you are going to be rich, or powerful, or educated, or anything like that. You can be like me, another wanderer on the deserts, looking to God for your sustenance." But today if he was alive, he would probably say, "But remember, I could produce food for a multitude, having nothing for myself. If you wish to be such a person, this is the way." And the Christian tradition is known for its love and compassion, something which did not exist in the yogic, vedantic tradition of the East. But unfortunately in this land of Christianity we do not find love and compassion. And please do not mistake organized charities for signs of love and compassion. I only call it conscience money. It is something, you know, to give to the people of Ethiopia who are dying by the millions. And then we can go back to our parties, to our comfortable homes with a clean conscience, but by no means is the conscience clean. Not because I say so, or anybody else says so, but because each one of you knows that to be the truth. It is something you have given from the superfluities that you have accumulated.

Now when I was in school we used to have these *fêtes*, as they used to call them. I studied in a Christian school, a Protestant school, and periodically the community would have a fit of conscience, as I used to call it. So there would be a charitable evening and people would bring things to be sold, the money to be given to some charity. Invariably, they were things which they did not want, an old pair of shoes, an old coat, things like that. Things which should be thrown away were given to charity. But, unfortunately, today we are not doing even that. If you read the newspapers, you see how much we are wasting, how much we are burning to keep prices up. Shiploads of cheese destroyed, hundreds of thousands of litres of milk thrown into the gutters every day, cows and sheep slaughtered to keep the prices of meat up. So where is even that original idea of giving to charity what we do not want? Even that is lost today.

Therefore, the message of the heart is very clear. Its message is absolutely unambiguous. You have a heart. Think of the other person. You know, it is not like a mirror in which you look at yourself. Here the heart must look to others. And we start doing that in a small humble way, whatever we can. Give with the heart. Because a million dollars, you know, a cheque for a million dollars, without the heart, saying, "What is this fellow coming troubling me? Take a million dollars," it is useless. It is the heart which makes of the gift, a gift.

You should all read a story, *The Gift of the Magi*, it used to be called. A young couple, lovers, boy of twenty-two, a girl of eighteen, both destitute. They get married, they are living in an attic, no money, no bed, no mattress, nothing. Now Christmas is coming and they want to give gifts to each other. She has beautiful long golden hair, and he knows she is admiring a pair of combs of tortoise shell, which he would like to present to her for Christmas. And he has a watch which has no chain. Her secret desire is to buy for him a chain of gold. But they do not have money for even one *baguette*. Christmas comes. They both go out in the morning, both looking miserable, unable even to look at each other's eyes. In the evening, he comes back with a parcel and he is waiting for her with the parcel on the table. After half an hour she comes. He looks at her and he is shocked. She has no hair on her head, all has been cut. She has a very small parcel in her hands. She gives the parcel to him, he gives his gift to her and says, "Darling, let us not open these presents." She asks, "Why? Because, with all my heart, I have bought it for you." He says, "Yes. But, you know, when I look at you, I know what you have done. You have sold your hair to buy something for me." She falls into his arms weeping and says, "Yes, but it will grow, what is there in hair?" He says, "Just open your present and see." She opens it, and it is that beautiful pair of combs which she has cherished for years and years but which, now there is no hair, she cannot use. Then she tells her lover, "Now open your present." He opens it and finds the golden chain for which he has been wanting for years. She says, "Do not worry about my hair, at least put this on your watch and let me see it hanging from your waist coat pocket." He tries to whistle bravely but fails miserably. He says, "Darling, forget it." She says, "But why? I have brought this for you." He says, "You know, I sold the watch to buy the combs for you." So this is the quality of love that we have to get, sacrificing everything, life itself. That was a beautiful story I read when I was in school, and it made me weep that such a love existed. Unfortunately, we have to speak generally of it in the past tense. It is a tragedy of the modern industrialized society, technological society, that often, too often, we have to speak of love in the past tense. I meet them by the hundreds every day. "I loved him," she says. He says, "I loved her." Yes, but what about today? What about the present? Do you not love today? No answer.

So you see, let us leave realisation, God realisation, self realisation, to the great saints and the sages, because those are distant goals. They are there. We have to achieve them. Without achieving them, our life cannot ever be fulfilled. But let us take the first step, not 'for heaven's sake', as they say, but for our sake. Each one for his or her own sake. Start with the heart. It will be the instrument of your realisation. But you have to start with it today, giving it its place in life. Not a small subordinate position, but the position of the monarch of your system. The heart must rule you, and then you will find the first step of the transformation, that you become people with hearts.

We are always afraid, you see, because we are afraid of being exploited. It is not that we want to be heartless, but the moment somebody knows you have a heart they try to, you know, pluck your heart. Yes. But remember the fate of a guitar, for instance. Can you make music without plucking the strings of the guitar? What would you think of a man who has a most beautiful, expensive guitar who never plays it because he says, "Oh, you know, it is such a tender instrument, I cannot pluck its strings"? The music of the heart must come when we allow people to dance upon it. One person, two persons, a hundred persons, all humanity. Then you will find the miracle: that by giving, you get more than you ever got by getting.

As my Master always said, "The poor beggars of India beg because they have to beg. The rich millionaires of the world beg, because they want more." And when we become givers with the heart, this miracle happens, you see, that the more you give, the more you get to give. So the only way to get is to give, not from your pocket, but from your heart. Give what you can, give what you have. It may be a moment of assistance. It may be a word of advice at the right time. It may be just a sympathetic word at the right time to the right person, which may even save a person from committing suicide. And once we start doing this, you will find that that love, itself, grows in such a way that it becomes a yoga. Because, now I and my heart are one. Yoga means union, as I told you at the beginning, and this is the greatest union that we have to achieve. It is not **my** heart. I **am** my heart and my heart **is** me. And because divinity is there, He and I are one too. Thank you.

5

Public Talk

Torino, Italy
August 4, 1988

It is a happy coincidence for me that I am here in this institute. I think it was in 1941 or 1942, when I was a student in Bombay, I had my first introduction to yoga through Swami Kuvalayananda. I never met him personally, but I had a set of books from him and, in a sense, I began to study yoga from his books. So I am very pleasantly, and happily, surprised to see his name and his photograph here. I am happy to meet with you all, more or less with his blessings, as it were.

In those days, I was very anxious to develop my body because, when I left school, I was about forty kilos in weight and one metre, sixteen centimetres, or something like that, in height. So you see, it was inevitable that my attention was on the body. I had also some higher ideas about psychic powers because all these yogic books, they promise us so many things. And, I think, when we are young we all pass through a stage when we like to have big powers and, in a sense, try to play God, as it were.

So that is how my yoga education began. I was able to follow the photographs in the books. They had very good illustrations in his books. And, for seven or eight years, I was a very assiduous practicant of yoga *asanas* and *pranayama*. So Swami Kuvalayananda is, in a sense, one of my various gurus, to whom I owe a debt of gratitude until I, more or less, graduated out of that school of yoga. I lost the fascination with the body, psychic powers, and things like that, not because I was very sensible, but because of certain tragic consequences caused by the practise of yoga without a guide. I had to undergo some very traumatic experiences because, at one stage, I was almost becoming a crazy fellow. But it was as if some benign deity from above was looking after me. And at one stage, what is wrong in telling you, I was unable to be alone, unable to go anywhere alone, even in the daytime, even in my house, from one room to the next. And fortunately for me, I was not in Europe, I was in India. Because if I had been in the West they would have put me under some psychiatric treatment, and perhaps I would not be here today to speak to you.

Anyway, after that I met my Master in I think 1964, after I had made a mess of my inner life. And one of the first things that I had to put before him, my Master, was my most unmasculine fears of being alone. It was very difficult to live with that fear, because I was in the sales department in my company, and I had to travel practically twenty-five days of the month. And you know, when you travel like that, you have to sleep in hotels, and in different places every day. My Master told me, "All this is because of your hatha yoga practice in which you have indulged, especially *pranayama*. Because, without guidance, it is almost fatal and even with guidance it can be very dangerous, unless the guide himself is a Master." And according to my Master, there are few masters of hatha yoga today, existing even in India. Not in the sense that they have not mastered the techniques, but in the sense of not being able to master the powers that are released in a system, in a practicant, in a disciple, for instance. And that was the first lesson I had learned, that though Patanjali may have written about the yoga *sutras*, they need a master to interpret them, and we need a master to follow those techniques.

In my subsequent life, I have met so many hundreds of people who have had disastrous consequences by practising *pranayama*, and even last week I met one in Courmettes, here in France. Because it is one thing to teach you how to do something, and another thing to be able to control that which is evoked in you by that practice. Especially when powers like the *kundalini* are used. Well, you see, when you cannot control your own powers within yourself, how are you going to control those powers in somebody else?

So it was my good fortune to meet Shri Ram Chandraji Maharaj, my Master, in 1964. And one of the first problems he solved in my life was the removal of that fear. It took him about one and a half years to do it. But I am glad eventually it went. And it is interesting how it left me. After many meditation sittings with my Master, he had been telling me, "It is getting less and less," but it was not really getting less and less, maybe five percent, six percent, things like that. So one day I told him, "Master, if you want me to tell you the truth, there is of course a reduction but it is not worth speaking about." I think that provoked something in him because he said, "Is that so? Come and sit before me in meditation." And during that meditation session I saw as if a black face was moving out of my face from the side. And after forty minutes he said, "It is over now." And then it was really over.

So you see, we should not play with these powers and *shaktis*, as we call them. Even in the yogic literature it is, sort of, equated with giving a child a knife. And therefore yoga *shastra* always warns, "Educate yourself in the use of power before you handle power." That is why you find so much emphasis on the first two steps, *yama* and *niyama*, in Patanjali's *ashtanga yoga*. The formation of character is very important. Because, as you all know, power is something which can be used either way. It can be used for good. It can be used for bad. The very power that holds the atom together can destroy this world. We have Kali the divine destroyer and, in her maternal aspect, the divine mother. So, it only shows that power should be used by those who have not only the capacity to use it but the character to use it. And I think, and my Master also used to say, that, "Very often, it is an unfortunate thing that, today, most people come into yoga without knowing many things about its dangers. Forget the benefits, everybody knows the benefits, but not the dangers." That is why my Master always emphasized the need for character before any power is given to anybody. Even in offices, when you are handling money, you must be a man of character, a person of character, before you are allowed to handle money belonging to the firm. That is why when yoga instruction begins straight at *asana* and *pranayama* without emphasis on the *yama* and the *niyama* aspects, and especially when things like the *kundalini* are touched and awakened, anything can happen about which, I think, in the *Hatha Yoga Pradipika* there is a definite warning, that there can come a perversion of all the human tendencies. And then we find perverted giants, you see, perverts with enormous power, criminals, sexual perverts, or, in the ultimate instance, they go to the mental asylums for treatment.

So for this reason, in Sahaj Marg, the branch of yoga that we deal with, there is no touch of either *pranayama* or *asana*, or mantras, or any of these things. One very important reason, I have already spoken about. The second is that even *kundalini shakti* cannot take you to liberation. Because it was not for nothing that Patanjali added the subsequent four steps, *pratyahara*, *dharana*, *dhyana*, *samadhi*. So, nowadays, we find yoga is stopping with it. The first two steps are never touched. The last four steps are never touched. We just deal with *pranayama* and *asana* and, of course, the consequences are not very good.

So in our system, Shri Ram Chandra Mission as this organization is called, my Master starts directly with the mind, therefore it is called raja yoga. Because his finding, his Master's finding, is that when you regulate the mind, everything else becomes automatically regulated. And in fact, character formation cannot be had out of books, nor by obedience to rules. But character has to come as a call from inside which we answer, and that is the essential character. A man of character is a man of character, not because of the pressures of society or the compulsions of law, or because of a fascination for culture, but because it is a need which we answer, the need arising from inside ourselves.

That is why my Master called character the balance of the inner and the outer tendencies of existence. Because, nowadays, we find that many people are pulled in two directions. There is always this inner call to purity and the truth and the right. And, unfortunately, there is a much more powerful pull from outside, for gratification of the senses, for a comfortable life. And, though it is true that nothing in this universe can counteract the inner pull, the inner inducement to the right life, nevertheless, we find the tragic situation that we are not able to answer that call because it has been so badly neglected that, today, it is too faint for us sometimes to even hear it.

Therefore the emphasis in Sahaj Marg is on creating, first, the inner purity, the inner idea of the good. And it is my Master's contention that there is no way except by regulating the mind, because everything begins there. Thoughts leading to actions, leading to consequences, leading to further thought, further action, further consequence. You know, it is an endless cycle.

That is why many people ask us, "Why do you not begin with the *asana* and *pranayama*." We say, "Well, the real beginning is with *yama*, *niyama*. But nobody does it nowadays. And *asana* and *pranayama* can give you nothing more than good physical systems, psychic systems, energy systems. And even if you are fortunate enough to have your *kundalini* awakened, it is not going to lead you to liberation. My Master used to say, "Please remember the first definition of yoga by Patanjali, which gives a very direct hint as to what yoga really means, *chitta vriti nirodha*." It must stop the mental tendencies and refine the mind as a regulative instrument of your own person, subsequent to which you can use that mind for your spiritual elevation.

So my Master's teaching says, "First regulate the mind, purify the tendencies, then you have laid the foundation for spiritual life — not until then." So we start with meditation straight away. And here, I would like to draw your attention to the fact that the first four steps are preparatory steps, not essential steps. Nor are they necessary to be followed in the sequence in which Patanjali has listed them. In fact, my Master used to say, referring to the *Bhagavad Gita*, that we should start from *samadhi* and come downwards. Because there is a famous *sloka* in the *Gita* where it says, "The divine tree is inverted, with its roots above and the leaves below."

So one who is able to regulate the tendencies of his mind becomes the master of that mind, instead of being the slave that most of us are. He is able to achieve what you call *samadhi,* very easily. In fact it was one of my first surprises, a very big surprise for me, because having read all the yogic literature and the lives of the great saints, where it is recorded that *samadhi* is the culmination of yogic practice, it will be difficult for you to believe me if I tell you that I had the first experience of *samadhi* within six months of my starting my practice of yoga under my Master. I did not know what it was. I had been sitting in meditation before him and I lost myself, and subsequently he had to shake me awake. I asked him, "What was this that I have just experienced?" I was very happy, very pleased with myself. But he just blinked and said, "It is nothing." I said, "But Babuji," we used to call him Babuji, "this is something like the *samadhi* that I have read about, described in yogic literature." He said, "Yes. But do not be misled by it, and do not meditate for it because it will divert your mind away from the spiritual quest that you have undertaken." *Samadhi* is blissful, no doubt. But as he pointed out to me, even yoga *shastra* defines *samadhi* as a stone-like state, inconscient, so it is not of much use.

And those of you who are familiar with Swami Vivekananda and Shri Ramakrishna Paramahamsa, only two instances I want to give you. Ramakrishna used to worship Kali, the Mother. And it is said he used to bring the Mother Kali into his physical presence, and he used to go into ecstatic states which you call *samadhi*. One of the most famous instances was when he was walking on a field. It was a dark cloudy afternoon and he saw a flock of swans flying in the air. And this sight put him into *samadhi*. He was almost falling, and his disciples had to hold him. He could have hurt himself. And it is written, recorded by himself, that eventually he achieved something transcending even Mother Kali's state by being initiated into raja yoga by a swami who accidentally came to see him, and who told him to meditate on this point. [points to forehead] And subsequently, when Swami Vivekananda came to him and he asked him, "Can you show me God?", it is said that Ramakrishna touched him in the chest with the big toe of his right foot and that, instantly, Swami Vivekananda went into *samadhi*. He had no preparation whatsoever. He was just a student at university who came to see Ramakrishna out of curiosity. So that is the indication that for *samadhi*, nothing is necessary except the power of the master.

And we have instances of swamis who meditated for hundreds of years and were never able to plunge into *samadhi*. That is why yoga *shastra* says, "Without a master, nothing is possible," because by your own effort you may never achieve what he can do in one instant, one moment of time. And the next interesting thing is what Ramakrishna told Swami Vivekananda, "You shall never have this condition again in your lifetime because you have descended from high for a specific purpose. If you get involved in this business of *samadhi* and self-gratification through *samadhi*, you will be useless to this world. You shall have it at the last moment when your life is leaving you."

So you see, what was the value of that *samadhi* when the master had to withhold *samadhi* from his disciple? That was Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda. And I already told you my experience with my Master. I am no Swami Vivekananda, but yet I had the experience of *samadhi* in six months of yoga practice with my Master. And my Master warned me about it and said, "Do not go after it because in *samadhi* you are like a stone." And the *shastra* itself describes it as a stone-like state, *pashana tulya moksha*. Whereas the real state, the divine state, is supposed to be one where we are totally absorbed inside, in what is a *samadhi* condition, but with one very vital difference — that we are also totally aware of the outer universe. In fact, it is a balancing of two extremes, you see, absolute absorption inside and absolute awareness to the outside. And in yogic literature that is called the state of *yoga nidra*, the divine state where He is asleep without being asleep.

So you see, that was my Master's warning about the yoga system of Patanjali. Not that the system is bad, it is a superb system. But perhaps it suffers from this incongruous effect, that it is too effective. And without prior purification and character formation in the disciple, it can be absolutely destructive. So that was the warning of my Master, and that is why we begin with *dhyana.* The idea being to focus the mind on one object of meditation, taking care to see that the object is not something solid, something without a form, because the effect of our meditation is conditioned or, shall we say, limited by the object that we choose to meditate upon. "As you meditate, so you become," this is a well-known old occult proverb.

So, in our system, we meditate on the abstract, no names of God, no forms, no mantras. But, at the same time, because it is impossible to meditate on nothingness, my Master suggests we meditate on light in the heart, something nearest to divinity. In its own way it is formless, attributeless, nameless, because the goal of the Sahaj Marg system is ultimate union, if possible, with the Absolute, which incidentally is what yoga really means. Yoga practice may have so many systems, and so many postures, and so many breathing techniques, but that does not make us yogis, it only makes us students of yoga. A yogi is one who has achieved oneness with the Absolute. And therefore it is somewhat astonishing, and also sorrowful, that many people call themselves yogis just because they are masters of technique. This is just by way of a comment because anybody who studies science does not become a scientist *ipso facto*.

So please remember that. And remember that the real goal of yoga is to become a yogi, in the sense of achieving union with the Absolute. And something which does not lead you to that ultimate state, we are not willing to treat as yoga but steps on the path. Like the staircase, it is meant to take you somewhere, first floor, second floor, third floor. But if it does not lead anywhere, what are you going to do with that staircase?

And I would like to repeat again this warning, this caution if you like, that there is nothing wrong with yoga abhyas, *ashtanga yoga*, the steps Patanjali has given, but please remember two or three very vital things. The first one is, the system is far too effective to be used by anyone but a master. Number two, the powers released are enormous. I mean, you cannot even imagine the powers that are released, powers which can, say for instance, knock the sun out of the centre of the solar system, things like that. And remember if such powers are to be invoked in you, or to be created in you from inside yourself, there must be a master to oversee your functions, and he must be a real master. And number three and most important, remember that power does not take us to God. It is spiritual evolution that is necessary. Because power, whether it is of the mind or whether it is of the body, or whether it is the power of possessions, they are all left here. Therefore you find in the ancient traditions the idea of *tapasya*.

And that brings me to a very important point concerning *asanas* especially. I asked my Master why there is so much importance, so much emphasis on *pranayama* and *asana* in yoga literature. The Indian mind is obsessed with these things. And, unfortunately, much of the stuff called yoga is exported from India. So I asked my Master, "Why so much emphasis?" He explained to me that in the old days when the rishis used to meditate for days together, months together sometimes, they developed the yoga *asana* system to keep their body fit so they could continue to be alive and meditate, nothing more than that. And then he pointed out the very important fact, in which if you have read the *Hatha Yoga Pradipika* you will find there a reference to it, that any *asana* to be effective must be held for four and a half hours minimum. Therefore, a course of yoga *asanas* over twenty-two minutes every morning involving eighteen *asanas*, is like trying to cook a meal in seven minutes: one minute potato, one minute rice, one minute this, one minute that, nothing is cooked. Those seven minutes of fuel have been burned.

So that is how the yoga *asanas* came to be developed by rishis who had no time even for a walk. Therefore, while they were meditating, they changed postures every half-a-day or one day, I do not know how often, and kept the system fit. And, when they discovered that in *samadhi* your breathing comes down to almost zero and there is oxygen starvation in the system, then came the development of *pranayama* as a quick breathing method, breathing technique, to replenish the system with the vital oxygen that it needs. And in fact, that eventually led to the discovery by my Master (you will find it in one of his books) that there is a point in the human system from which oxygen is generated from inside. And my Master explained that that is how there have been rishis who could stay in suspended animation for months, for years, buried underground in caves, not as a feat of being buried underground for sixty-four days, seventy-five days, as is the fashion nowadays to have such yogis, but because it was a vital necessity to stay alive until they achieved the goal, which was realisation of the absolute.

So you see that *asana* was a physical aid, and *pranayama* was to create oxygen in the system, both to enable the rishi to stay alive in a healthy way until his goal was achieved. That was the goal. Not a physically perfect body, not a powerful body, not even a psychically perfect body, but a body which would remain fit until it could be thrown away as no longer useful. In fact, there is a famous *Upanishad* which deals with this. Those of you who are interested can read that old allegorical way of dealing with the human system as a chariot with five horses and a master sitting in it, and a coach man driving the coach. The essence of the teaching is keep the body sufficiently fit to take you across the journey of life, from this human situation in which we find ourselves to the divinized state of a union with the ultimate, which is the goal of all humans everywhere.

So that is why, in Sahaj Marg, we absolutely do away with all these techniques about which my Master warned me again and again. We have many physically weak abhyasis and I used to suggest to my Master, "Why not allow them to practise yoga *asanas* and *pranayama*?" And his warning was, "If they do it and it is beneficial, their mind will be diverted away from the main purpose." And therefore he never permitted it in our system. Therefore we start straight with meditation, as I said earlier, on the abstract illumination in the heart. We try to bring the mind to regulation by keeping it on one object all the time. And through that, achieve a state of concentration which, incidentally, is another error in most English translations of yoga books, that very often meditation is treated as a technique for concentration. Very simply, meditation means to think continuously about one thing. And by repeated practise, when we are able to achieve that condition, we have developed the ability to concentrate. And then, anything on which you put your mind, it is revealed to you.

So the mind becomes an instrument of revelation, and therefore it is said such rishis could see into the future and see into the past. But here again my Master gave me a warning, "God is not an object. He is not a physical being. He has no position anywhere specifically in the universe. Therefore He cannot be an object of concentration. Therefore, however powerful the mind may be, whatever fantastic powers of concentration you may develop, the Divine can never be revealed by that."

So we come to the next stage in our system of yoga — why we meditate on the heart. Many of you must be practising yoga as it is understood here, and the point of meditation is generally between the eyebrows, the point of the nose, things like that. Here, in our system, we take the heart, because it is supposed to be the residence of divinity in our system, and by meditation on the heart, we develop the qualities of the heart, qualities associated with the heart, such as kindness, compassion, love. Because you will find, if you study the yogic literature of the past, not all rishis have achieved liberation. In fact, very few of them did. While at the same time they had enormous powers, enormous control over powers, nevertheless they had not developed the qualities of humanness and charitableness and compassion. The tradition is replete with stories of saints who went about cursing everybody. One of the outstanding examples is a rishi called Durvasa, a man known for his anger, and with whom even other rishis had to be careful, because he had developed such fantastic powers that he could destroy by just looking. Now, however much reverence we may have for such a personality, and I can assure you in India they are revered almost like gods, my Master said, "If there is no purity of being, purity of character, if there is lack of love in the heart, this is the type of rishi you will produce. One who can think of nothing but destroying others who anger him, who annoy him, who displease him even, and who had to be corrected finally, because of some destructive tendencies arising in them which had to be cleaned out by them, you see, after again doing thousands of years of *tapasya*."

So that is why, in the modern age, my Master has emphasized, so much, the need for love in our relationships.

And his finding, his Master's finding, is that the power of love is absolute. In fact, it has no power and therefore its power is absolute, because when you have a power which has power behind it, which has force in it, it can be combated by somebody who has a little more power behind him. You can see this in the modern situation, you know, arms build-up, nations trying to have more powerful weapons, more powerful bombs and as this arms race develops, we are more and more afraid of the consequences of this build-up, even if it is your own nation which is the most powerful, because the fact that you are the most powerful nation in the world does not preempt your being bombed out. Which only means we may not be alive to see the victory for which we are fighting. And in the Greek tradition, it is called a *pyrrhic* victory, a victory without meaning.

Now the power of love is something else. It wins by submission. It overcomes by submission. And therefore my Master said, "Even God has to bow before such love." And therefore in India we find this fascinating example of a parallel discipline, a parallel culture developing, the *bhakti* culture, as it is called, where you find everything has been totally thrown away. Patanjali is read and studied but no more used by such people. For them it is the way of *bhakti*, the way of loving God, adoring God, for serving God. Through that tremendous love, which they are able to develop, they are making God love them in return. And then this union between the Ultimate and our individual self becomes such an easy and facile thing without having to go through the tortures of the body, the tortures of the mind, that the strictly yogic tradition demands. The strict yogic tradition is an ascetic tradition. It demands asceticism. It demands withdrawal from life. It demands celibacy. The tradition of love denies the need for asceticism. It focuses our need to think only of one, and only that one, the Beloved, whatever we may call him: God, deity, guru, Master, anything. It does not matter. And it is a fascinating and surprising thing that, through love, they are able to achieve those divine states which, through *tapasya*, people have not been able to attain.

The second thing is that the tradition in India speaks of many things including, very often, even the gods coming down to stop the practices of such rishis because they were becoming too powerful for their comfort. But you see, love does not pose such dangers to anybody, not to the lover, not to the beloved. If successful, if sublime enough, it only promises a union with the beloved, which cannot be achieved in any other way.

Therefore we find now two streams of thought, the yogic tradition and the *bhakti* tradition. And in my Master's teaching, I found one synthesis at one stage. As I said, I achieved a condition of *samadhi* within six months of my practice. I would like to tell you that I was a business executive, a salesman travelling widely. I could under no circumstances have practised yoga successfully or even efficaciously. And about my prior practice on my own without a guru, I have told you of the disastrous consequences it had. I was not able to exist even with myself. And such a person to achieve *samadhi* in the sixth month of his yoga practice under my Master was something. I do not know if people can believe it. I could not believe it myself, so I will not blame you if you do not believe it.

Once I asked my Master, "My breathing has almost stopped. Now how do I continue to exist?" He said, "That is the beauty of yoga, you see, that when *samadhi* is established, all the lower systems are in some way controlled from above." *Pranayama* becomes a fact, not because you do *pranayama*, but because your system takes over a system of breathing which it needs at that moment, without the concomitant ill-effects of the psychic powers being set up in us, or created in us.

So you see, if I may say so, Sahaj Marg is a safe, easy system in which it is possible to become a yogi in the true sense, without practising yoga. So that is the beauty and the remarkable research of my Master, and his Master before him. I asked my Master, "What is the need to do meditation then?" Because, suppose you are in love with somebody, you do not have to meditate to fall in love. And he laughed. He said, "It is a discipline which is necessary. Because human beings have so little discipline, personal discipline, I suggest meditation and all these things as a discipline to train yourself in obedience, to train yourself to bring your mind under regulation, remembering that a fully regulated mind yet cannot take you to God realisation, but is useful in other ways, for instance in research, even in yoga, and things like that." And he said, "Meditation on the heart, thinking of the divine presence there, by remembrance, it develops love." See, here comes his great technique, that we call constant remembrance. He was always saying that, "We remember those whom we love." By reversing the technique, by remembering, we can create love for the one remembered in our hearts. So the meditation of the Sahaj Marg system is a technique to create remembrance of the Beloved, thereby creating love for the Beloved, and then He steps in and says, "Welcome."

So that is why we have meditation. Now Fausto Russo talked something about cleaning. That is a very important aspect of our yogic tradition. Because my Master's research indicates that whenever we think or do something, it leaves an impression on the mind. And when these impressions are repeated, again and again, they become hard, and what we call ‘grossness’ comes into being. And unless they are removed, whatever we may do, we cannot be pure. Pure, not in the sense in which it is understood today, you see, cleanliness, truth, and things like that, but spiritually pure, that is, subtle. Because my Master’s teaching was, "God is the subtlest thing in existence," so subtle that we can hardly say He exists; whereas we are at the physical end of the spectrum where it is totally gross. What we have to do, by this system of cleaning, is to remove this grossness progressively, become subtler and subtler until we have achieved that level of subtlety which is **His**. And then only union can happen, you see. This is a very obvious thing. You cannot possibly become one with something which is of a different level of existence, different order of existence, even biologically speaking. In fact, it is one of the characteristics which distinguishes a species from another species, that they cannot mate, they cannot cross. So my Master said, "If there is something which prevents our union with the Beloved in that sense, it is that we are in two levels of existence. His level is something, our level is something else. Essentially we are the same."

And he explained this by taking the example of water vapour and water and ice, which is the same substance, but one is solid, one is absolutely free, unlimited, expansive. So water is in between, it is a fluid, mobile, and you have the totally solid heavy condition of ice which can, by the application of heat, transform itself into water vapour and be free to roam around and expand wherever it likes. So in that sense, there was nothing wonderful about what my Master had revealed. There was nothing esoteric, nothing occult. It was a very simple teaching. Until you shed your grossness and become subtle like Him, you cannot mix with Him. Not in the sense of intermingling with Him, union with Him.

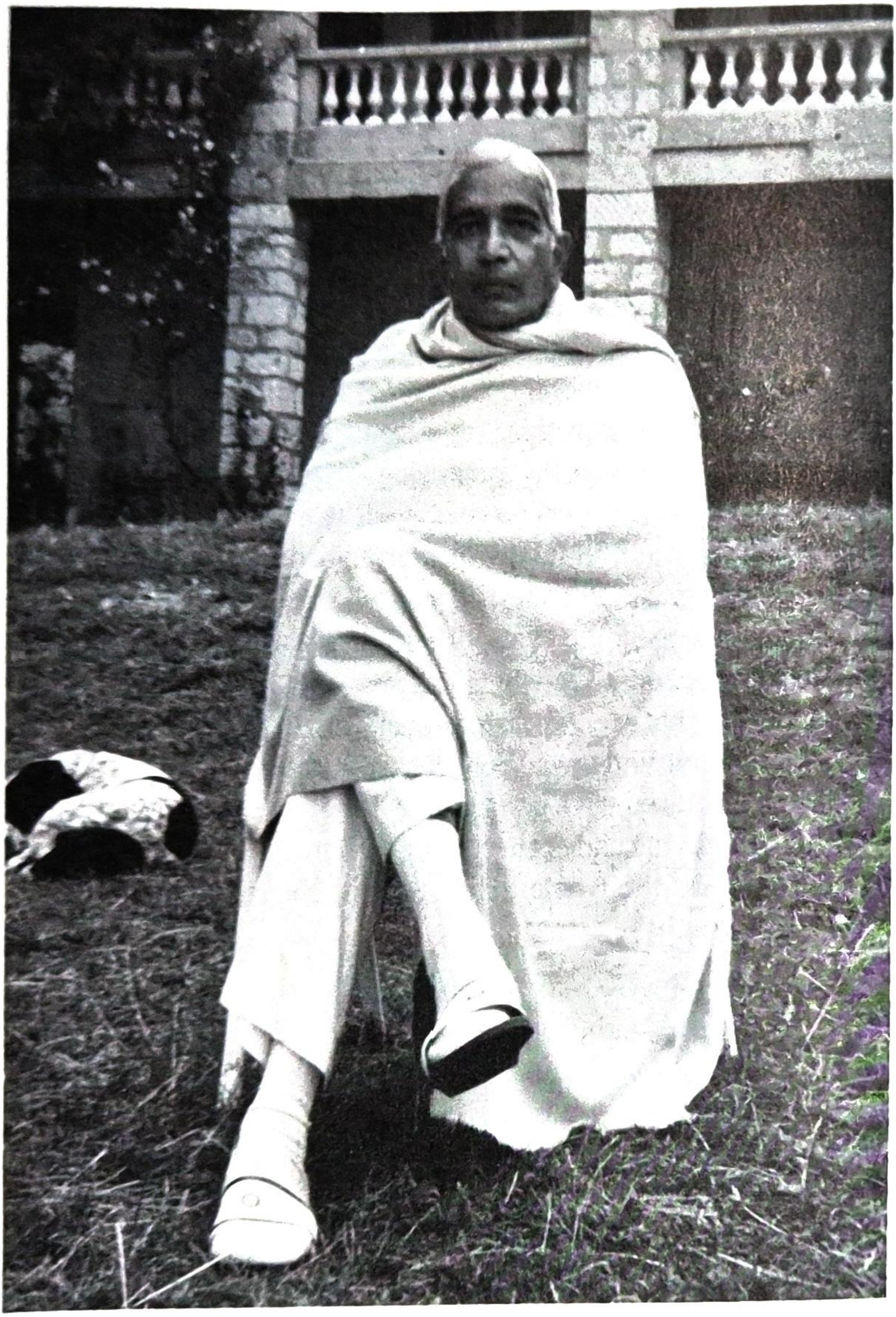
So that is why our cleaning method is the most important aspect of the Sahaj Marg practice. It emphasizes the need to participate in it, every evening, as a discipline. This is very effective. And the Master helps by periodically cleaning us to the extent of the need to do the practice of meditation. And, as we become progressively subtler and subtler, even our living habits change.

That brings us to a very important point in my Master's teaching. Because in the Hindu system, in the yogic tradition, renunciation is a vital necessity. Giving up! And the tradition is full of stories of people who left their wives and children and went away into the jungle to practise meditation. My Master's teaching was totally different. He said, "We do not renounce. As our level of being changes, unwanted things fall off by themselves." Very much like when a plane lifts off the ground, the earth falls below it. And he used to make a joke about that. He said, "Imagine if a plane had to take off by pushing the earth out into space beneath it." Impossible to the point of absurdity. When it takes off, the earth remains behind.

So that is how, in our system, renunciation happens without our having to renounce anything. Perhaps the greatest renunciation is this idea of attachment to life, which is what we experience as the fear of death. I do not think anybody is free from that fear, I mean, at **any** time. The older we get, the more afraid we are of death. But with this fantastic system of my Master, when the inner existence becomes something finer and subtler, more or less in tune with that infinite existence of the Divinity, this fear of death goes. Not because we think of death and negate death, but because, in a very natural way, we have achieved oneness with that eternal life, which we call divine life. And this body becomes merely a vehicle for that achievement. It is as easy to leave it as it is to get out of your car when you have come home. And that is how my Master defines the ultimate state of human existence as, "Going back home to that original home from which we have unfortunately descended here."

So that is a brief summary of the system of Sahaj Marg raja yoga: what it does, what it can do for us, the promise it makes, the easy way in which it can be practised, which my Master emphasized again and again as being a universal system, which can be practised by human beings anywhere at any time. He said, "I call it a practical and universal system because it is not merely theorizing about something, but because you do something to become something." I said, "Yes, everybody says the same thing." He said, "No, there is a small difference. Other systems tell you to practise to get something: beautiful body, powerful body, divine being, powerful system. But they do not tell you how to **become** something, how to be **that**." Therefore this promise of enabling us to become something is a very extra ordinary difference from what we experience every day. Men have wives but they do not find love. Women have husbands but they have no love. Children have parents who do not love them. All this tragedy of having and not becoming something. So Sahaj Marg yoga reverses the whole trend. Become something and then see what you have.

Thank you.



6

Samskara

Hyeres, France
August 11, 1988

You want a speech or just some stories? *Histoire.* Well, first a story. I will tell you about what Babuji used to say about samskara. Samskara cannot be escaped by anybody in the physical existence. It has nothing to do with his level. Even the great, and the greatest personalities, when they live in the human level, they have to have some samskaras. You should not worry about it. It has to go somewhere. It is like you clean your house and you put all your *poubelle* in big nice plastic baskets, and put it outside and then do not worry about it. The idea is to keep yourself as free of samskaras as possible. And it is the preceptor's job, the Master's job, to help you in that.

Now there is one interesting possibility because, in the Hindu tradition, there is this tradition that the guru has to take the samskara of the disciple, and that is why they do not initiate very many disciples. So in the religious tradition, it is accepted that this is a fact. And therefore, such gurus choose their disciples carefully, and also tell them that, after initiation, they should live in such a way that they do not form samskaras, because the poor guru has to take them. That is true in the religious tradition.

But in the spiritual tradition of Sahaj Marg, I am not talking about all traditions but only about Sahaj Marg, it is not true to say that the same tradition applies. Because Babuji has told me so many times, that we get some samskara inevitably, you know. It is pulled when you do the cleaning with a little devotion or concentration. But it is a very small part. And Babuji also used to say that for personalities like Lalaji and himself, any great personality who exists on earth, they can exist only if they have some samskara. Even abhyasis cannot exist here if all their samskaras are removed. That is impossible. Therefore, to exist in the human condition some samskara is necessary. And sometimes Babuji used to laugh and say, "I am grateful to my abhyasis who give me some samskara, so that I continue to exist."

So that is the whole story about samskaras. But it is good that abhyasis should be aware that they should live in a nice way, not in the way of the standard of living, but in a spiritually nice way, so that they do not make more samskaras. Then their progress becomes easy. Otherwise this is like all those old myths, you know, in the Greek and other traditions you have, where you climb four steps and come down five steps. It becomes like that. Now that is the problem of the master, not your samskara *per se*. Because, in Sahaj Marg, the tradition is great enough to accept the whole samskara of this universe and blow it away. It is no problem at all. The problem is when you continue to create samskara.

As Babuji said, "They come to me to Shahjahanpur for three days. I do whatever I can for their benefit. I clean them thoroughly, but as they leave my gate they start creating samskaras again." I remember once some abhyasis came for Basant and spent some three weeks with Babuji. I was also there. And then some of them went to Benares, some of them went to Kathmandu, and they came again to Shahjahanpur. And Babuji was sick for two days. Not because of their samskara because, you know, he is like a furnace — if you put two more leaves or a block of wood more, the furnace is not going to die out, because fire cannot be put out by fuel — he was sick, I think, with disgust, you see. Because his labour has no end. Clean. Make it dirty. Clean. Make it dirty. And he said, "You know, this is what they do. I kill myself doing their work for them, and you know what a superb condition they had after Basant. And now look at them." Then he called them and told them, "If you want to go to these ugly places, Benares, Kathmandu, and so many other places, for heaven's sake, go first and then come here so that I can clean you once and for all. Then go straight home. At least try to keep this condition until you reach home."

So this is also the old tradition in India. Even applied to temple worship, disciples or devotees were told that when they went to the temple, afterwards they should go straight home. Unfortunately, you know, the Western mind, it is always seeking titillation. Titillation, I do not know if the exact word exists in French. It has a particularly nasty meaning, titillation, an ugly meaning, dirty meaning. I want you to understand that ugly meaning rightly, not because it is ugly, but so that you may understand what this tendency leads you to. It is like a man who has a nice bath, soaking in the tub for a half hour, bath salts, all the perfumes of Provence in it, you know, herbs, and then he goes and rolls in the mud. What would you think of such a person?

So it is for your benefit, you see. But fortunately for us, the spiritual masters, like Babuji Maharaj especially, are too kind, too prepared to sacrifice their lives, their comfort, their health, for us. So he was never critical, he was never, what should I say, disciplined, and he suffered. You all know how much he suffered. Every time some abhyasis came and left, he suffered at least for a day. And the older he got, the more he suffered, because the physical system, you see, he may have been God Himself, but his physical system was that of a human being. So it suffered.

So please, do not unnecessarily add this burden to yourself. Because I gave a truthful statement there, that the Master does not take upon himself your samskaras except something by way of his food, you see, let us say '*ahara*'. But he has to bear the burden of your suffering. It is your suffering which becomes his suffering, not your grossness. And therefore when people do stupid things, ugly things, nasty things, sinful things, it is not a criticism, nor injunctions saying do not do this, do not do this. It is not like, you know, the Ten Commandments of Moses. It is his sorrow, you see, when Babuji says, "I do so much for them and they come back, again and again, sick, miserable, dirty, filthy, sinful."

So this is the suffering of the Master, that he feels his life is wasted. Because whatever he may do, he is not able to be successful with us. That is the greatest suffering that these masters have to bear, poor fellows. We must sympathize with them. We must pity them. I think it is one of the myths, you know, where you have to roll a big iron ball up the mountain. And just as he is reaching the top, the ball rolls down again. I think it is a good representation of a master's life.

Now there is only one way to make a master happy. Remember that only by developing well, you can make him happy. The quicker you develop, the happier he is. Because that is how he views the success of his work. You see, this is not like a laundry, where we can be happy when the people make their shirts very dirty, because the laundry gets more business. That is for him, for the laundry, because money is there. He says, "Oh, you want your clothes washed thrice a day. Why not?" But here it is different.

And Babuji used to jokingly say, when he was talking of family planning, that only in Sahaj Marg we have real family planning. Because every soul he liberated, it never came back again. And therefore, in an absolute sense, one soul was reduced forever from this life. We are interfering in that work when we do not evolve quickly and when we play with our lives, you know, mountain climbing, surf riding, delta planing. Yes!

And the south of France is very famous. All the wine, I think, of France is grown here. Most of the vices are concentrated on the Cote d'Azur. People gamble away their lives and, perhaps, it is one of the big generators of, what shall we say, *petit Satan*, small Satans. See, why I say this is, you know, all these distractions are dangers on the spiritual path. Some of you will remember that for the first five weeks in Courmettes we had very bad weather. It was always raining, *brouillard* and things like that. And I was enormously happy. Everybody thought I was one of those crazy Indians. I was happy because it kept the group together in one place. When you have good weather people are off in their shorts, climbing the hills, swimming the oceans, and generally making a mess of their lives.

So you see, there is always this distinction between the life spiritual and the life material. And, if you are a good abhyasi, there can be no compromise in this matter. You cannot say, "I will meditate for one hour and then go out delta planing for six hours." You cannot even delta plane for half an hour if you are a good abhyasi. Of course, if you are just dabbling in meditation, and trying to prove to yourself that you are also a philosopher, a psychologist, and a meditator, that is your privilege. But you are never going to be a spiritual person in the real sense. Not because delta planing, or mountain climbing, or swimming is bad, if only you can do them with your mind still attached to the Master. But I would like to caution possible delta planers who want to do it in a spirit of constant remembrance, that they will end up on the ground very quickly. So you see, it is not possible to do both. It is not that it is bad to do both. It is not possible to do both. And whenever you are able to do the other thing it means this spiritual thing has been suspended for that moment.

So where is the question of constant remembrance then? I have always been happy to repeat what one young boy said in America. He told me very seriously, "Chari, I practise constant remembrance several times a day." You can understand what that constant remembrance is! So this is the danger of moving your mind from the spiritual goal, the spiritual aspiration, the spiritual remembrance, to the material plane. I would like to repeat, I am not criticizing the material life. It is good, only for those who are prepared to be happy with it. I assume that you are all here with a spiritual aspiration to grow beyond the material life. Then we have to distinguish between the two, and choose between the two. It is a hard choice, I agree. But for how long? It is only hard so long as my eyes are going this way and this way, this way and this way, this way and this way, asking this or this? This or this? This or this?

I have always felt that the ultimate torture for a child is to take it to a toy shop and tell it to buy one toy. It wants everything. It will pick up this but then say, "No, no, this," then say, "No, no, that." And sometimes I feel, if it is a really good child it would go crazy. It is only the stupid child which comes out with one toy. So we are like that. A man who likes his women, "Shall I marry Helen or Joan or Mary?" You know, there are enough wandering on the streets. Or cars, "Should I buy this or this or this or this?" Food: "Should I eat a pizza or an ice cream or both?"

Now, when you go into the material life, you become crazy, not because the life is crazy, but because you drive yourselves crazy by not being able to choose. Now people are always saying, "I must have the freedom to choose." And especially in this great land of *liberté*, *égalité* and *fraternité*. France, where liberty is not something we enjoy or handle, but which has become a silly, stupid religion, you see. I must do anything I choose. I must get drunk. I must drug myself to death. Now how can that be liberty when you end up in a jail or in the mental asylum? And they are so stupid. They do not know how difficult it is to make a choice, especially when things appear equally good to us.

There is a famous story of, I think it was, one of the most virtuous ladies in the Hindu mythology. She was a lover of Lord Krishna. And just to test her chastity, he made multiple forms of himself appear before her and said, "Find out which is the real Krishna here." Initially she could not choose. She did not know because they all looked alike. They were exactly identical. And then the story goes that because she was so virtuous, having nothing but the Lord in her heart, she just closed her eyes and prayed to him. And when she opened her eyes, she saw only him. And all the other forms disappeared.

So, you see, that is the type of choice we have to make. When things are bad or good, it is easy for any fool to choose. But today when apparently everything is good, we are like children in a toy shop where every toy is good. But mother and father have enough money only for one. What shall I do? Therefore spiritual science says, "Do not worry. Any toy is as good as the other. They are different only in the form and in the way they move." You go to a crystal shop, "Should I buy this glass or this glass?" Spirituality says, "Do not be stupid. Do not pay six hundred francs for one crystal glass when you can buy one for three francs because both break equally." We are like that. You may be a rich man. You may be a philosopher. You may be a poet. You may be the greatest artist in the world. When we die, we all die the same death. So spirituality says, "It is not in life that you are going to be different. These are superficial differences. It is in death you are going to be different. If you live your life as you should live it, in whatever station of life your earlier destiny may have put you, you will die in such a way that you do not return again to this existence. But the others are all going to come back."

So you see, the true difference of a spiritual existence is not in the way we live life here on earth, but in the way we die, ultimately, here. And as Babuji Maharaj always said, "It is one of the greatest tragedies, and one of the greatest mysteries, that man learns everything by experience." You learn to operate a computer by operating a computer. A child learns to walk by falling and getting up, falling and getting up. Ultimately it does not fall any more. But we have died so many millions of times, and yet we have not learned to die correctly. This is the tragedy of death. The tragedy of death is not that we die, but that we never learn to die in the right way. See, it is like a man who opens the door, closes it, opens the door, closes it. And he is always inside. Or like one of these nice brass doors, polished, in big hotels, four sections, rotating and children use it as a roundabout. They just go round and round and round and round. They do not go anywhere, just stay there.

So we are using life and death like one of these roundabouts. Eternally we are going round and round. In fact, somebody has called it the eternal return. Now whose fault is it? We always want to blame God. We want to blame destiny. We want to blame everything except ourselves. So spiritual science says, "Live in such a way that this death is your last. No more coming back here. Then life has been properly lived and death has proved a door into eternity." Now the function of death is precisely to lead you out of this life into the higher life. But even that has to be learned, you see, and somebody has to teach us how to do it. Now, that is what we learn in meditation.

I remember the first time I went deep into meditation, what you call *samadhi*. It took Babuji several minutes to recall me out of it. He said, "That's all." I did not open my eyes. He said it several times, louder and louder. And finally he had to touch me. Then I asked him what happened. He said, "That is an experience which you should have at death. What we really do in meditation is to learn to die." So I told him this would be a very difficult thing to teach to people, because who wants to die? They want training in how to live, more joyously, more healthily, more richly. He said, "They are fools, because they do not know the secret that, unless you know how to die, you cannot live." And it is such a simple truth, you see. Because one of the greatest, most prevalent modern diseases is fear of death. And it manifests itself in so many ways. So when we go deep into meditation, Babuji told me, "But for the grace of the Master, you would not have come back today." I said, "Why did you bring me back?" He just smiled and kept quiet. He said, "But it is a fact that when you went into that level your soul did not want to come back. Therefore it took me four minutes to wake you up again. Because that is its original state, its real state, its natural state."

Now we have become conditioned to existing in the body. We associate our existence with the body, our pleasures, everything we associate with the body. And then we have this funny idea that when the body goes we are dead. It cannot be. If life is eternal, how can I die just because my body has dropped? So when I said that meditation teaches us to die, it teaches us by showing us that there is no real death. It is a state of existence which we call death. But the moment you get into meditation, and go deeper and deeper into that condition, and the Master's grace brings you up, again and again, out of it, we learn the truth about life and death. That is real, this is artificial. I have known abhyasis weeping when they have come out of meditation and prayed to Master, "Why do you not leave me there? Why do you bring me here and torture me again?" Babuji used to sympathize. He said, "Yes, I know your state. I can understand your mental condition, but it is not permitted to shorten your life like that. But I am happy you had this experience because it is this experience which will divert your mind away from this silly, stupid, material existence." So I asked him, "Why do you call it silly and stupid? It has its moments of glory, ecstasy." He said, "It is silly and stupid because it is not eternal. The highest ecstasy is but momentary." The most beautiful and, you know, buoyant health lasts a few years, maybe, if you are lucky. And the beauty of a woman, well it is proverbial, it fades like the beauty of a flower. If the women are wise they accept it, and then they age beautifully. They really age beautifully. Beauty does not go but they become old and the beauty is still there. But when we rebel against it and live an artificial life, a cosmetic life, that beauty becomes ugliness, repulsive. And it is a pity, you know, that in the Occident we are so conditioned, we have become so conditioned to looking at masks that the true idea of beauty is lost.

I remember the first time we came to Europe with my wife. I was making a joke about some pretty girls and she said, "If you go and kiss her, you will kiss wax and grease and paint and colour. You will not get to the real girl underneath it." Of course, it was an extreme comment but it is true. And you know, I realised this when I went to America. And sometimes, you know, in India, when we want to close an envelope, we use water. But there I was in a hurry, I licked it. It was sweet.

I said, "By jove, you have sweet envelopes here." And they said, "Yes, Chari, because, you know, we lick everything so they make everything sweet." So you see, we do not give only children lollipops, we create them for ourselves too, bonbons in different forms.

So this is the unreality of the situation which Babuji did not like. And his main teaching, of course, was that the material life is a vehicle to take us to our destination. It is necessary, otherwise we would not be here. But it is like a boat we use to cross a river. When we cross over to the other side we walk, and we leave the boat there. I am always amused when I see these cars going with big boats, small boats on cars, you know, on the trailers. I am often wondering whether human beings have not descended to the level of intelligence of the snail which carries its home on its back. And all because of your exaggerated sense of holidays. And the holiday is what? It is an escape from life. It is amazing how people can enjoy these things. Of course you may say, "This fellow is an idiot. He is a fool. How can he know without enjoying?" It is like a man who has committed suicide saying, "You are a fool because you have never committed suicide." Or somebody who eats cow dung, you know, the excreta of a cow, saying, "Why do not you eat it and see how nice it is?"

We have an intuitive faculty which tells us this is good, this is bad. We do not have to taste everything in life. And very often I get annoyed when the people of the West say, "But Chari, we have to experience everything." Who said so? Who said it? I do not understand this need. Therefore, you go into situations from which you cannot get out, and then you weep, you beat your breasts, and you cry for help. And eventually, like that famous example of the cave in Plato's *Republic*, you have become so accustomed to your little presence that, when the master comes with the key to open the door, you are prepared to invite him in, and say, "Come Babuji. Enjoy our life, see how nice it is here," but you are not prepared to go out with him. Now this is what happens when you come for meditation for half an hour and then go back to the other twenty-three hours of your own activities, fooling yourselves that you can make it.

So you see, we have to understand that it is no use dabbling in spirituality. It is a complete life in itself, like everything. Even when you go to school, at some stage you have to make up your mind. Is it going to be chemistry? Is it going to be physics? Is it going to be mathematics or engineering or medicine or computers? What? You have to make up your mind some time, you know. You cannot say, "Why not I do a bit of everything?" Then we are like that famous example in English, a jack of all trades, and master of none. But that is a poor example, you see, because in the material world it does not matter what we choose. There have been great saints who have been butchers.

One of the most famous stories is about a young man who wanted to meditate and get what they call *atma gnana*, the knowledge of the Self. He meditated under a tree in the jungle for twenty years and got hold of the highest powers. Then a crow dropped something on his head, he was disturbed, became angry, opened his eyes and looked angrily at the crow. And the poor crow was instantly burnt to ashes. He was very pleased. He said, "This is the culmination of my sadhana." Such powers, you know, you look at a crow and it is burnt. He walked towards the city. And saints are supposed to beg for their food. They do not work, they do not grow anything, you see. So he knocked on the door of a house. A young lady came and said, "What do you want?" He said, "I want food." She said, "Wait. I am coming." She came after two hours. He became more and more angry all the time, you see. Finally when the young lady came, he looked at her. And she said, "Do not think I am the crow in the forest that you can burn me with a look of your eyes." He was shocked. He said, "How do you know about it?" Then she said, "My son." He was an old man. She was a young lady, you know, but she said, "My son, you have learnt nothing yet. You are angry with me because I was late, but I am a married woman and my first duty is to my husband. Until I could finish my work for him, I cannot attend to you. Now, if you want to learn from me how I learned what I know about you, in the next village there is a saint, go and see him and learn from him humility, understanding and the ultimate science of the spirit." He said, "How shall I recognize him?" She said, "He is the only butcher in that village."

So you see, what we do, how we do it, all these things are irrelevant. You can be a butcher, a baker, a candlestick maker, anything, you see. I say this because there are some funny notions in the West about this too, you see, forgetting that anything we do we should do well. Doing it, too, as a sadhana, so that it will remove our ideas of good and bad, pleasant and unpleasant. And the essence of that teaching is to get rid of the ideas of good and bad. The ultimate teaching being that, as long as you are conscious of these opposites of existence, as we call them, beauty and ugliness, virtue and vice, white and black, all these opposites, you are going to stay here in this world. So do not put your mind on these things and wonder about them. Think about the one thing in which there are no qualities, but from which all qualities come. There is no power there, but from it all power descends. There is not even knowledge there, but everything that we know comes from it.

So we are taught to rise above this world of opposites, as philosophy calls it. That is why, in the material world, attraction and repulsion are both dangerous. We cannot be attracted by anything, nor should we be repelled by anything. The real saint, the real spiritual person, is not aware of these differences. I used to remember Babuji looking whenever abhyasis came to see him. He rarely remembered anybody's name but he could tell, immediately, what he had done to her or him in the last sitting, or six years back, or even fifteen years back, depending on the abhyasi. He has told me, "Look, this man came to me. I think it was the second of August 1976 or 1954, whatever it be, you see, and I gave him a sitting. And that condition, which was so beautiful, he has destroyed it." I used to ask him, "Babuji, when you remember this, why do not you remember his name?" He said, "It is not important. For me his condition is important, not his name."

So you see, this is the essence, that you have to know what you have to deal with. A man who deals in diamonds knows only about diamonds. He does not look at your face. He looks at the diamond, puts on his eye glass, looks at it under the light, under infrared, under ultraviolet. You are forgotten, you see, you are only the bearer of a diamond. Similarly, when we went before my Master, he looked at our heart. Nothing else. Anybody here who has been with Babuji will remember this. When you stood before him for the first time, he looked at your heart, looked at the sky, looked once again at the heart, and then he started smoking his hookah. That was enough. In his computerized mind it was recorded forever.

And you know, the beauty of that teaching I realised when once some abhyasis, Western abhyasis, asked him to show the original condition which prevailed when human beings were first created. And he just said, "Sit before me." And he moved three times like this, you know, jerks, and I could feel that condition. It was one of absolute terror, you see. He asked all of us, "What did you feel?" Most people could not reply. I told him I felt only terror. He said, "Why do you say only terror? What else did you expect to feel?" Then he said, "There was only terror at that time." The human being exposed to this vast universe for the first time, not knowing where he is, why he is here, what he has to do, it was the awakening of terror. And sometimes I think we have been running away from that awakening all our lives, because we feverishly seek security, safety.

And here you see the great lesson of spirituality, that as long as you remember yourself, you are conscious of your existence, the need to be healthy, happy and wise, and the need to be safe and secure. Think of Him, all is forgotten. So you see, real safety, real health, real security, comes only by remembrance of the Master. I would not say that it changes anything in us physically. It may. It may not. That depends on our samskaras and what Babuji wants for us. But it makes an absolutely fundamental change in our existence because, for the first time, we have stopped thinking of ourselves. And if this change is not brought about in your life as an abhyasi, any benefits you may get from meditation and cleaning, they are only temporary.

That is why, you know, it is a very big tragedy. I find people coming, again and again, with the same problems, exactly the same problems. And most of the people have the same problem also. Each one thinks that it is unique to himself or herself. "Oh, you cannot imagine my suffering." And if you tell them, "Yes. I know all about it," they get annoyed. So you have to give them a patient hearing, give them a sitting, give them a cleaning, but if you advise they get angry again. So you see, this tragedy — that it is like that old biblical, I think, example of a well, of a bucket which goes to the well, again and again, and comes out empty. Now how is it possible unless the bucket has a hole in its bottom?

So we are taking only to throw away. It is not only in the material sphere that we are throwers of things. It is wrong to call the Western society a consuming society. It is a throwing-away society. From your beautiful *bourgeois*, to your cars, to your women, to everything, you see, use and throw away. That it is packed in nice black plastic bags, does not make it any less excessive, or less dangerous. Unfortunately, you see, in the material world, I mean, unfortunately for us, this is a very bad tendency in the spiritual life. In the material life it does not matter. How much can you pollute the world? All this nonsensical talk of polluting rivers and oceans as if we are gods, you know. If for twenty years there is no human being on this planet, it would be as clean as it was on the day it was created.

I remember reading a book, long ago, about forty years back, by a man called Willem Vanloon. He was a Dutch man, you see, and there is a small, what you call it, quatrain of four phrases, four sentences and it is a beautiful idea, you know. He says if you put all the human beings into a box, all that you would need is a box one mile long by one mile wide by one mile high, one cubic mile, one and a half kilometres by one and a half kilometres by one and a half kilometres. Quite a small box, and he said, "If you put all the human beings in this, nail the box nicely, balance it on top of a mountain peak and give it a gentle push, next year there will be a lot of grass at that place." I mean it is there in the book written by a Dutchman. Ultimately, we are only manure for the soil.

So forget all this arrogance. Even to think we can pollute this world is an arrogance and a pride. We will destroy ourselves but not this world. God did not create the world to be destroyed by mere human beings. What somebody called, you know, animals with two legs strutting about as if they owned the world. Perhaps it was Shakespeare, because he was capable of such really venomous criticism, or maybe Bernard Shaw, "Well-clothed bipeds strutting about as if they owned this world." That is the phrase. So even our idea that we can destroy something is egoistic, arrogant, proud, you see. And remember, ultimately, what we destroy is ourselves. The mad man only destroys himself. The crazy person only kills himself, but a highly educated, highly industrialized society, is destroying the world. And eventually only the humans will suffer.

So it is necessary to understand that our powers of construction are as limited as our powers of destruction. A scientist can create the temperature of the sun in his laboratory for a few milliseconds, but only a God can create a sun. We can be as miserable as if Satan is possessing us, but it takes a God to create a Satan. We can never be Satans. So let us give back to God all these functions, you see, and occupy ourselves with our business. What am I here for? Why was I born? What is this human existence that I am leading now? Remembering that it is the highest level of evolution achieved so far. A level of existence which saints say is so rare that it is the highest blessing to be born a human being. And then to waste it in pleasantries, and pleasure seeking, and things like that. I mean, it is more stupid than giving a very expensive porcelain vase into the hands of a child.

So this is what we are doing with ourselves. Let us come back to ourselves, you see, forget the world, forget politics, forget economics, forget pollution. I used to be as worried as most of you are, and I asked Babuji what will happen to us if all these frightening powers of the West are unleashed some day. Because inevitably we will suffer, you know. And Babuji said, "Why are you afraid? As long as you are leading the right life, nothing can effect you." And then he told me one very fantastic truth. Because that morning, there was appearing in the newspapers a write-up about the atomic stockpiles of the two great nations of this world, great in their powers of destruction, not of construction. That is another pity, today, the great men are those who can destroy, not people who can build. And we were all sitting discussing it. Babuji came and said, "Why are you all looking at it so seriously?" So we told him about the atomic stockpiles. In his own smiling way he said, "I am telling you, if there is a saint of calibre, he can neutralize all those weapons in one second." I was a little, you know, inquisitive. I said, "Babuji, how will you do it?" He said, "It is very easy. Put a barrier in the atom, you see, so that nothing can explode it. It is as easy as opening a door, or closing a door, to let in somebody, or let out somebody." See, these are the powers which a saint possesses. There is no physical power on earth, or in this universe, which surpasses the powers of a saint of that calibre.

Many of you will remember that famous question by one of the American preceptors, Grace Kimball. Very serious, very affectionate, very loving, she sat next to Master and said, "Babuji, what is it you can really do to show your mastery of this world?" He put on one of his most childlike and innocent smiles and said, "I can spin the universe like a top." And you all know Babuji. You know it was not an empty boast. I realised that night, why does he have to spin it? It is already spinning. So somebody must have set it spinning.

Of course, there are unfortunate trends in modern science, and modern philosophy, trying to make God unnecessary. Why is God necessary? In fact, one of the latest books published, which is on the New York Times best seller list for the last six weeks, I think, it is trying to show that God was not necessary either to create this universe or to destroy it. And he writes a hundred and sixty pages of science to prove this. I can only imagine that he is afraid of God himself, and would prefer that there is no God. You know, we all expose our weaknesses by denying that weakness. A man who is afraid of water wants to get into the water or run away to the mountains. It is like that, a man who is afraid of God would prefer that there is no God in this universe. Then we are not afraid, there is nobody to punish us, to give us ten commandments, create a hell and a heaven. We can be happy in St. Tropez or in Cannes or Monaco. It is a beautiful life. *C'est la vie*, as the French say or *la vie en rose*.

So this is the tragedy of human existence, that a brilliant mind — he is very brilliant, you know, that man who wrote that book, surpassing brilliance, because they are trying to show that he is as great as Einstein and Newton and Galileo, you see — and that such a great man should only set out to try and prove that there is no God, what a misuse of that intelligence, of that brilliance. And that stops his further research. So, you see, this tragedy of the material existence, the beauties of science, the beauties of philosophy, and you find that epitomized in the Occidental world, that philosophy has no relation to life. It is a subject studied in schools and colleges. Morality has no place in life. It is for the church. Science does not need God. They forget that God did not need science.

So you see, we are creating this very fundamental schism in our natures, knowledge without divinity to control it, to guide it, to regulate it and give direction to it. Life without morality, forgetting that it is morality which gives purpose and power to our existence. Mental existence without a real philosophy of existence, making it just another game of chess. So you see, the Occidental mind, it is creating this void by dividing life into two. And therefore we find all these cases of disintegration, split personality, the extreme limit of endurance of the human soul. It is like a man, you know, who is trying to jump a crevice in the ice, and falls into the crevice. It exists only because there are two blocks of ice. Put them together and there is a crevice no more.

So what we really need is to bring back into life the twin elements of existence, a material life governed by spiritual values, a physical life governed by moral values, a mental existence governed by the highest philosophical traditions and truths. And the physical existence itself, nothing but a vehicle to take us to a goal, to which philosophy, spirituality, morality, are all indicating all the time.

So I make the suggestion that in Sahaj Marg we are attempting this enormously grand, ultimate synthesis of existence. And if it is successful, it will not merely produce a complete person in whom you find everything in perfect balance, it will produce a saintly individual, a masterly individual. And remember, here, Babuji's oft-repeated statement that, "The Divine life is a perfectly balanced life, no exaggeration in any direction. A saint does not have to be intellectual, or rich, or powerful, or strong. He does not have to be anything." And this is this nothingness which spirituality promises, how, by becoming that, the quality of which is nothingness, such a person becomes capable of generating, from within himself, everything in the universe. He has no form. He has no name. He has no substance. He has no qualities, in a sense. He is divinised to the highest possible extent.

So you see, this is the goal of human existence. Not just, you know, that marital problems should be solved, or some sick person should become healthy. Most people, unfortunately, have only these very petty aims when they come to Sahaj Marg. It is like going to the *Banque de France* and presenting a check for one *centième.* Of course he will honour it, because you have the money, and he has to pay. But they will laugh at you. So when we go to a Master and say, "Babuji, give me this," as he has written himself in *Voice Real*, of course he gives us. Because that is his nature, that is his generosity, that is his love for us. But in his heart he weeps. Because he wants to give something great, and we ask for something so petty, so insignificant that he has to weep for us.

So you see, coming back to our sister's comment about grossness, I do not think that a Master can ever be afraid of grossness. It is only fuel for the fire. It is like a small fire saying, "Do not put more wood on me. I will die out." The more you put, the stronger it burns. Why should he be afraid of grossness? He is a divine machine. A master is a divine machine who removes grossness and gives us himself, little by little, stage by stage, to make us like himself. And we have nothing to be afraid of, in such a situation. And if anybody wants to make the Master happy, the only way is to become what he wants us to become. I hope and pray that this will be so, for all of you.

Thank you.

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Love and Discipline

Aix-en-Provence, France
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We have been talking a lot about Babuji and Lalaji, and the special effect that they had upon us. And I have no doubt that there have been many other personalities in the past who created such a similar impression on their disciples. And when we study these personalities, we find that they have all been very different in their historical, in their physiological, in their ways of living, you know, the whole context has been different. If you permit me to analyze a little, I would think, or I would suggest, that some of these past personalities, very great ones, almost like *avatars*, have been really, in essence, like one personality. It is as if, you know, the same river is flowing through different states, and all that has changed is the body that was carrying these great spirits, or that one, perhaps it was only one soul, you see. Of course, if I name them many people will object and protest, because they are great personalities and people will say, "But how is it possible that they are reborn in the same way in different bodies?" And I do not want to create that misunderstanding, or a problem for ourselves.

But nevertheless, it is my conviction that this is happening, has happened, will continue to happen. And sometimes I even wonder whether the same personality can be alive at the same time in several bodies, I mean, I do not see why not. If they have been really great, and if they have been divine in their status, and if they had the ultimate powers of the Almighty, why could they not manifest in several bodies at the same time? So I am not suggesting this as a joke. It is a very serious proposition.

We have an ancient Indian tradition that the father is reborn in the son. And many people have argued, you see, that how is it possible that he can be in five or six sons for instance, or ten sons or twenty-seven? Some of these old families had twenty-seven children. So some people say the eldest, some people say the youngest, must be the father reborn in the son. But I prefer to think it is like a river, which splits up into several tributaries, or distributaries as we call them, when it nears the ocean. And they carry the same water of one river but they perhaps have different names. Or like a tree which starts with one trunk and branches out, we do not call the different branches different trees. They are one tree. So why I say this is just to try and bring to your inner consciousness the ultimate unity of all things. And to take the river, or the tree, as the example, again you will find that a river is made up of many tributaries when it begins and, similarly, a tree has many roots which feed it. So you start with many, come to one, and branch out to the many again. This seems to be a phenomenon of nature.

Now, here I have a slight problem to analyze with you all. Perhaps with your assistance we may come to some sort of a, not a decision, because we cannot decide, but an inner, some sort of an inner happiness, understanding. It is this, you know, the idea that many things merge to produce one. And we have this same thing in a family, you see, we have our forefathers of so many generations. How many streams of culture and influence, genetic influence, have merged to produce us, each and every individual here? And that is why you find the newly married couple, when they have a child, the father and the mother generally quarrel. The mother says, "The child looks like me." The father says, "No, he looks like me." And then the four grandparents come and each put in their claims. So this is, you know, the panorama of evolution that we have to face, that there are many contributing factors which create us. And like the roots, which feed the tree to make one tree, which must again give out its life into so many branches. We have also to imbibe this tradition, and to accept it, and to disseminate, in a similar way, the teachings of our Masters.

I have often been flattered, or felt happy, when Sufis have found something from Sufism in Sahaj Marg. Buddhists have found something from Buddhism in Sahaj Marg. Hindu people have found something from Hinduism in Sahaj Marg. But Sahaj Marg is not any of these things, though it has something of each. Again, it is like a child having the nose of its grandmother, the ears of a grandfather and the chin of its father, you know, very belligerent types, sometimes. So you see, there is no such thing as purity, or impurity, in great traditions. Please remember this. There is certainly what appears to be a mixing, but it is not mixing. It is that each one picks out what he thinks looks like something else. A unity can never be divided into its constituent parts. It is even wrong to call it 'constituent parts'. They appear as constituent parts, like, you know, you can say a tree is made up of its roots. Constituent parts do not exist in the human.

So you see, we should never try to split up. And this is the problem we have when we talk of meditations. Many people come and say, "Oh I am doing meditation." "I am also doing meditation." And some say, "What you are doing is the same as what I am doing." So please remember this, because even in Sahaj Marg we find, you see, that people say, "Well, what is the difference? Lalaji and Babuji, they are the same." Other people say, "No. Lalaji's teaching was different. Babuji's teaching is different, and now you are trying to change something." Now, all these problems come when we try to cut the tree, the trunk is one, the leaves and the branches are many, the roots are many.

So we have one system, which to others may appear in so many different ways, but it is always one system. And what we see as different is what we have conditioned ourselves to see as different. Like somebody says, "This is part of Sufism," or, "This is Buddhism." We also find different things depending on what we want to find in it. Essentially, this applies to the love of the Masters. I cannot see how love can be different, how Lalaji could have loved differently, how Babuji could have loved differently. It is like saying, "The light of this candle is different from the light of that candle." It is not possible. If you come nearer, one is hotter. The other is not so hot because you are more distant from it. And if you are at the same distance from them, there can be no difference. Of course, here it is not physical difference, it is your inner distance, or closeness to the Masters. And if you are able to be really close, I mean, in the idea that we are absolutely one with them, we cannot find any difference between Babuji and Lalaji. Because the essential thing in both of them is the same.

That is why, when Babuji was able to speak of his Master, he spoke sometimes even with tears in his eyes, always with gladness and joy, occasionally with a little sorrow. The sorrow, the gladness, the joy, the tears, they were all referring to the same love of his Master. It depended on how he, for that moment, felt the love of his Master. And this we often find in our families. Children especially should remember this, because sometimes the father brings a *gâteau*, sometimes he brings a stick. They are both the expressions of the same love, you see, but we are trained to believe that only one who gives us, you know, chocolates and bonbon and hugs and kisses, he loves us. And when they discipline us, we think it is in some way bad for us and that they are harsh, that they are hard parents. We must remember, there is a saying in Tamil, my mother tongue, that only the hand which can beat has the right to hug — the arms of the mother. And of course the father also. Because, if they correct us, if they try to discipline us, it is because they love us. Now somebody was telling me the other day, "See, our parents are very harsh, too much harshness, too much discipline. How can we tolerate?" But I have found children all over the world, you see, when the parents are not interested in them, or do not discipline them, they feel the lack of love. And such children quickly go wrong, not because they want to go wrong, but because they feel no love at home. "My father does not care a damn what I do. My mother cares even less. What have I to live for?"

So parents would do well to remember that when children appear to rebel against discipline, it is only in appearance. They do not really rebel. No sensible child would ever rebel against a father's just discipline, or a mother's just discipline. Now in the West, unfortunately, both parents and children have forgotten this. Therefore, we have this peculiar thing that there is no family relationship. And it is as if in the atom, you know, suddenly the nucleus has let go of the electrons, and everything is flying in all directions. And that is why we have this chaos in our society today. Because if the atom is not held together, how can the molecule be together? How can matter be held together? How can continents and galaxies be held together? Sensible parents should never be frightened that they will lose their children's love because of their discipline. Because the children know, you see, that their parents are disciplining them only because they love them enough to discipline them.

Now this is also the discipline which the Masters give us as abhyasis. I mean, I cannot imagine how some gurus are permitting their disciples to drink, to smoke, all sorts of funny things. And they claim they are interested in their disciples' spiritual welfare. I would suggest that they are not even interested in the abhyasis' physical welfare. So this is just by the way, you know, to caution you, to beware of a guru who says you can do what you like. Because such gurus are only interested in themselves, not in you. They want your money. They want your presents, your gifts. And the only thing that they can give you in return is a false, a spurious liberty and freedom, the consequences of which can be extremely tragic. So beware of freedom.

So this is my advice. I have thought over this freedom business for so many years. The real freedom is where love exists, and helps us to find our way through life in a very disciplined, controlled manner. I am always referring to the, you know, the dog as a pet. It will run ahead of you when you are walking, but it will stop, look back to see if you are there, and only then run ahead again. It does not want to be tied up, but it does not want to be too far from you, also. And children too, small children, when we are young, you know, between the ages of say three and eight, we run round and round our parents. Run ten metres and then come back to report our findings, "Daddy, did you see this?" "Mommy, did you see that?" It is an exchange not so much of information as of love. And if the child feels that the parents are not at that moment interested in where it is, then they try somehow to recapture that interest. And at least then the parents should attend to that child. Because children crave attention which they interpret as their parents' love for them. Attention is a sign of love. And this does not stop only with children, you see. It goes through our life till we are very old, and perhaps even when we are dying. That is why I am often amused when I find in obituary columns that such and such a person, aged ninety, died surrounded by all the members of his family. Why should they have all the family around when they are dying? Precisely because it shows their love for you, that they are there when you want them, when you need them most. And this is why we also go to the railway station, to the airport, to see people off. It is as if we say, "Do not worry. You are not alone. We are all with you." And because we cannot be physically with you, we say, "God speed. May God go with you."

Therefore, in India we say that a child is born alone, but when it becomes old and dies, it is surrounded by many. And that is the secret of existence, because as Babuji used to say, "Creation is always away from the public gaze." That is why the act of creation, in the East, is supposed to be something sacred. It is not secret. Everybody knows what is going on, but it is sacred. It is sacred because it is love entering into the act of creation to create new life. Therefore, there is this whole mystery surrounding this creative process. And when we vulgarize it, and make it something fit for the parks, and the garages and, you know, motor bikes, it really demeans that very noble, almost divine act of creation, and turns it into something like animals. What should I say? In fact, in the East this tradition extends to any form of expression of love. That is why we have no kissing in public, hugging in public, holding hands in public. It is something very sacred between the two people who love each other. And this same reverence for love must be brought to bear in the relationship between the guru and the disciple, also.

I remember once Babuji wrote to me a letter in reply to a letter of mine where I had said, "I do not know how love can grow and grow and grow. It seems to grow without limit." I meant the love of the disciple for his Master. And he wrote back and said, "It is true that there is this enormous love and I love you too but I should not repeat this." Because love, when it is exposed, is like cutting a seed to show the life inside it. If it is cut, it is dead. So all the young people here should remember this. Why? So that at least the next generation, you know, can re-establish love as a citadel of hope, as a citadel of eternity, as a citadel of completion, of perfection, of creation.

Otherwise, you know, it is just something crazy happening, you see, like seeing a movie. That is the first lesson. The second lesson is, love cannot change. Once we love, we love forever. It should apply to human relationships. It should apply even more to the divine relationship. Otherwise, again it is, excuse me for saying it, all over the world they say it is like French love, love bought and sold, love bartered, love bargained for. I do not agree with that term. But it is how the world looks on France. I remember when Babuji came here first in 1972, we were in Paris for a few days. And then, subsequently, we went to London, and Babuji was suffocating there. And he had to clean the atmosphere, as he said, "Five percent," so that he could exist in it. And Vera Davies asked him, "But Babuji, you are just coming from Paris. If you could tolerate that atmosphere, why cannot you tolerate the atmosphere here?" Babuji answered, "I do not know why you are comparing London with Paris." She said, "Babuji, you are too innocent. Paris is the home of vice in this world." I mean, I am telling you what happened exactly. And Babuji said, "But I did not find the atmosphere so gross there as I find it here in London." So you see, it is true that you have an unfair reputation for this sort of thing. That was Babuji's experience and it could not have been wrong. Nevertheless, as we say in India, "It is very difficult to build a reputation, and we should be very careful about what sort of a reputation we build." So all this, you know, songs about love, and poetry about love, and the changing dance of love as I call it, you see, it is not for human beings.

We are always fascinated by the world of birds and animals when we hear that certain species mate for life. If one dies, the other remains alone for the rest of its existence. You know, I used to wonder why we are fascinated by these stories of birds and animals? It is very clear, you see, because we long for such a stability in our own relationship with other human beings. And today we see the chaotic conditions of society. Nobody knows what a stable relationship is any more. And I often wonder why so many people come to spirituality? Why? Are they really seeking spirituality? I have often doubted it. Excuse me. I am not doubting the sincerity of what you feel. What you feel is that you think you are after spirituality. But from the way that I have found abhyasis talking of Babuji and Lalaji, I have come to a conclusion of my own, which may be right or wrong, that what they really sought was a stable, long lasting, if possible eternal relationship with other human beings. And so they came to my Masters.

And why are there so many women in our assemblies? They far outnumber men everywhere. Even in India more than sixty percent are women. It is the woman who wants a continuing relationship, a stable relationship in which she can bring about a family, look after it with stability. And given today's males, and their marauding tendencies, I think in the Master they find at least one human male with whom they can have a respectable, long-lasting love relationship in which they will not be exploited. Because this is the single most obnoxious thing that is happening, you see, exploitation of love. And I am happy, you know, that there is this instinctive or intuitive understanding in the hearts of people that, at least with a real spiritual Master like our Lalaji and our Babuji, you can seek and find such a relationship here in this world of ours.

That is why the more there is immorality and chaos in society, we find there is also a greater craving for the spiritual life. Initially it is only for a relationship. But if they persist in this relationship, then slowly they find that the Master only represents something which is far, far beyond their imagination even to conceive — the beauty of a spiritually unfolding existence, which is guaranteed by the safety and the security of a divine love. A love which cherishes you enough to discipline you, so that you can grow in the right environment. In fact, a discipline which is like the skin of our body, you see, which restricts, or rather, shall we say, confines without restricting growth. Because without the skin we would be dead. At the same time, it is not like a piece of iron, or an armour that we used to wear in the olden times. It grows with us. As a baby we have a skin, as an adult human being we still have a skin, and to borrow an English expression, it fits us like a glove, even closer because the skin is the vital barrier between the inner human being and his very hostile environment outside. And this is how we should look on discipline too. It is the skin of love which confines us, and guarantees us safety, security from a very hostile environment which is outside. And the skin grows as we grow, allowing us to grow within its confines, expand within its confines. Similarly spiritual discipline, spiritual law, allows us to grow within it, and it expands to permit our growth.

Now the truth of this can be understood, or realised, only by one who has lived long enough within that discipline to have grown in it. Because such a person can see that as an abhyasi he was undisciplined. As an advanced abhyasi, he was still there, but very much grown, and still within a discipline. And perhaps as a Master, there is still that discipline which is governing his existence. And perhaps, who knows, when we become divinised, we shall still find that skin of discipline around us.

In the beginning, the discipline is something separate from us, visible, something which irritates us, perhaps annoys us. Slowly it becomes part of us. And then you will find that you do not know what discipline is, because then you and your discipline are part of one organization, one system, which you call 'me'. No human being has ever found his skin troublesome. "Oh, it restricts my growth." Similarly, true discipline can never stop your growth within that framework. And, as I repeat, it grows and grows and grows, infinitely, to allow your expansion to the very, outermost limits of infinity. And it is only love which can make such a discipline available, such a discipline possible, and in us, such a discipline acceptable.

I think that is one reason why, unless there is love between the abhyasi and the Master, there cannot be true spiritual growth. Because it is the Master's love for us which makes him suffer with us, struggle for us, create a discipline for us, makes him capable of bearing our tantrums, our rebellion, all because of his divine love for us. And if we have that love for him, it makes that discipline acceptable, knowing that it is his love which he gives us, not his harshness, not his humanness. But it is his divine love that makes it possible, makes it available for us.

That is why, especially in the Sahaj Marg tradition, there is so much emphasis on love. It makes confidence possible. It makes trust possible. It makes faith possible. Ultimately it makes surrender possible. Because, to my mind, this progression from belief to trust, and on through to faith, and finally to surrender, is only a greater and greater appreciation in us of the love of the Master for us, by which we grow ourselves into an understanding of what love means. And to me, it has always appeared that love is a planting of a seed and allowing it the freedom to grow into a tree, and to permit it to put forth its own seeds in due course. And this is the grand unfolding of the spiritual existence. And I think this is what Babuji meant when he said, "I do not create disciples or slaves. I create Masters." It would be tragic to misunderstand him as saying that everybody can be a Master. But everybody can be like the Master in every aspect of his functioning.

So we find that it is the love of the Master which makes him sow the seed. What is his seed and where is it sown? The seed is himself, and the plot of land in which he sows it is our heart. And it is in our heart that this divine plant, this divine existence, must grow and become big, and ultimately flower and seed in its turn. So you see, love gives us enormous benedictions, the benediction of the divine, but it also casts a responsibility on us, that it is a treasure which we receive to distribute again to all the people in the next generation. Because that is how the divine stream must grow and branch and branch out into the eternal existence of the Infinite.

So this enormous potential is in one seed. It is said that, "No species can die out so long as one seed is available because that one seed carries the history of that species within itself." And this aspiration we find in human beings. It is expressed in the desire for a child. And, in some societies, they want many children so that at least one will continue. And that is why you find, in nature, this enormous profligacy, because for a tree to ensure that at least one more tree of its own type comes up, knowing the dangers to which the seeds which are broadcast are subject, the tree produces a billion seeds where one would be enough under a perfect environment.

So Nature recognizes, in itself, the dangers that it has itself created for itself. And this is the danger we have to recognize. As abhyasis, we have an inner nature which creates an outer environment, of which we have to be afraid, because from it we can suffer, the consequences of which can take us down instead of up. And discipline is nothing but preventing this operation of an external agency upon your internal sacred secret resources, providing for us an absolutely viable environment in which we can grow safe and secure in His love.

Therefore, I have always felt, you see, that discipline is only an expression of love. Without love there is no discipline. And that is why we have this very fascinating example of parents who have thrown their children to the winds, letting them run loose, you know, like dogs let off the leash. Nevertheless, they feel so guilty about it that they pamper their children, "What do you want? You can have it!" What they could not do with love, they are trying to do with bribery. I tell the children here, the younger generation, "Beware of parents who give you things too easily. Love the parent who will ask you, 'Where are you going? Why are you going? When will you come back? With whom are you going?'" You must love such persons, because they love you enough to ask these questions to make sure you are safe. Because to such parents, their children are an investment in their own love.

But this, again, is a tragedy of modern society, you see, that children are not so much products of love as of casual liaisons. And the children know this. They feel it. They rebel against it. They hate it. Therefore you find, even in well-ordered societies, the children running riot, becoming hooligans, drop-outs, drug addicts. It is not that they want to do these things, but they want to show their parents, "If you could have done it, we can do it one better than you." I think it is a way the children take revenge on their parents. And when it pervades a whole section of society where all the younger generation are like this. You have this rebellion between the elder generation and the younger generation. You find this especially in the American cities, you see, where the people most feared are the youth gangs. If you talk to them individually they are very nice children, but they are so disgusted with the elder generation that they say, "To heck with the whole thing." And one question they always ask is, "If my dad could do this and my mom could do this, why can't I do it?" So you see, the old Sanskrit saying, the Vedic saying, "For the father is reborn in the son," is very true. If the father is a drug addict, what can he produce? Therefore this, you know, very inconvenient principle for the older generation — unless you are disciplined you cannot discipline your children. And that is why such parents are able to keep a hold on their children until the age of seven or eight when the children do not know anything. But, when the children grow up sufficiently to know what is going on, they say, "Oh, shut up."

So discipline, like rain, like grace, must come from above, in the sense that disciplined parents produce disciplined children. Loving parents create loving children. So this is a lesson to the parents, you see. It is the old question of invertendo. We are talking of child indiscipline, student indiscipline, youth indiscipline, when the real source of all that indiscipline is in the parents. And it is never too late because, like children can change, parents must also be willing to change. And when we recognize this, I mean, when the parents recognize this and they are willing to change, you find their children hug them and kiss them with such love as you have never known in your life. Because, for the children, it is a re- creation of that old promise, you know, that, "From you I shall get love, from you I shall get protection in which I can grow, in which I can manifest you, ultimately. And if you have broken that environment, what can we do? Now that you are truthful enough, honest enough, most important **loving** enough, to recognize your faults and correct yourself to recreate that environment for us — we love you all the more." So parents should never be afraid of accepting their mistakes, especially with their children. It is the only sure way of winning your child's affection and love forever. And if you only rely on your authority as a parent to keep them in control, that authority is soon lost.

This principle you find embodied in Sahaj Marg that the Master must live a disciplined life first and be an example to his disciples. I mean, imagine a Master who sits in the privacy of his room and drinks whiskey and tells his disciples, "You should not drink." They will say, "Why not? If you can drink we can also drink." I remember once when I was with Babuji in Shahjahanpur, it was very cold, bitter cold, in December or January. We were talking until three o'clock in the morning, sitting on the cold stone floor in his room, and I was really shivering with cold. Suddenly Babuji looked at me and he said, "You are feeling so cold?" I said, "Yes Babuji, you know, I am from the South." He said, "I have some very nice Napoleon brandy. I will give you some. It will warm you up." I said, "But Babuji, you do not allow drinking in Sahaj Marg." He said, "You are highly developed enough to not be bothered about these things. For a realised soul, nothing is forbidden." I said, "Babuji, it is a dangerous doctrine. Because, if somebody sees me drinking in your presence, they will start drinking tomorrow." And he said, "Yes, that is what we have to be afraid of."

So you see, a realised person may not have, or let us put it the other way, may have a discipline which is so soft and so extensible that you can move in it to the ultimate limits of that discipline, nevertheless, the need to be an example to others, a visible example, is very much there. Therefore he did not give me the drink, I did not accept it. And later, I thought perhaps it was a test for me also.

Now there was another example concerning Babuji and Lalaji when Babuji was sick and the doctors asked him to eat chicken. Babuji went to Lalaji and said, "What shall I do? These people are asking me to eat chicken for my health." Lalaji said, "Look Ram Chandra, if I permit you to do it, every other abhyasi will want to eat chicken. So do not ask me for permission." So you see, this sort of discipline, where discipline excludes something from us, is for our good because, if it is permitted for us, it is poison. And the Master has to be, personally, an example of that. So you find this fascinating, you know, contradiction, brought together in one person that, at the same time he is divine, he is totally free, and yet he has to subjugate himself to his own discipline, for our sakes, to teach us: "Look! Even I am not beyond my discipline." And only when we grow to his limit do we find that there was no discipline ever necessary for him, who is the creator of all, but because of his tremendous love for us he binds himself to a discipline so that he can encourage us to similarly bind ourselves to that discipline.

So we have to come now to the next stage of love, you see, that love means disciplining ourselves first before we can discipline others. And that is why parents have to be disciplined before they can discipline their children. So you see, it is like, again, a river. I am always fascinated by a river. A river cannot be a river if it did not have two banks confining the water within them. So what is discipline but giving your existence a shape and a form in which you can grow? And it is love which makes that discipline available to us because, if he did not love us, he could not care less.

I have asked Babuji, "Why do you come to the West?" Because he has told me several times, you must excuse me for telling you the truth, on some occasions he has put his hand on his head and has said, "Why has Lalaji sent me into this gutter of humanity?" And I asked him, "Then why do you come here, when there is no need for you to come to Europe? You have six hundred million people in India, why do you kill yourself for ten abhyasis: ten abhyasis here, two abhyasis there?" He said, "Because they are also human beings. They are also part of my responsibility." Now you must imagine how much he loved us that he was willing to descend into what he called the gutter of humanity to rescue us from there. Only when you love someone, can you jump into a river, or jump into a pond to pull out somebody who is drowning.

So that is the love of the Master for his abhyasis, for humanity, because the only difference I see between those who are abhyasis and those who are not abhyasis is a very simple difference. He loves all equally. The abhyasis are those who have voluntarily accepted his love in the form of his discipline. The others have accepted his love without his discipline. And when they accept it they become part of us. For him there is no difference. So now you see the enormous extent of his divine love that, "Accept my love or not, accept my discipline or not, be willing to grow or not, nevertheless you are mine! And if not today, tomorrow, day after tomorrow, you have to come." Because finally it is like a house, you see, when we are outside the house, we think we are free, we are at liberty to do what we like but, as it becomes darker, we want to go home. And therefore it is no mystery, you see, that today it is so dark that we find more and more of our children coming into our house.

And therefore in the spirit of the Master, in his love for us, we welcome all of them to ourselves. And if we love our

Master and we wish to serve him, this generosity of outlook must be ours too. No preceptor, no abhyasi, has a right to judge anybody else. If, being what we are, we could be the receptacle of his love, we cannot deny that similar right to anybody else, whatever we may think of him or her. This is the ultimate generosity of that immense divine love which can say, "Come! You all belong to me." Thank you.

8

Public Talk

Courmettes, France
August 20, 1988

Good evening, sisters and brothers.

I have been here for three months. I do not know how to explain why only today we meet here, all of us from outside and our own people. Because today is the first day of the last week of our stay here.

It is a pity we did not meet earlier, but as my Master used to say, "Nothing is lost because time is lost," which is a typically Oriental outlook about time, and might cause raised eyebrows in Europe where we have the slogan, "Time is money." But we have, you know, a peculiar idea of time in the East which, if it is understood correctly, is a very fascinating subject. Unfortunately in the Orient also, it has not been understood correctly, so that we find the people of the Eastern societies are generally lazy and not working. They have generally deserved the appellation of fatalists, people who do not believe in time and work, but depend on their fate. Unfortunately that is a big misunderstanding. You are trying to convert time into money, while in the East they are trying to convert time into eternity and, unfortunately, both are not correct. That was what my Master meant when he said, "Time is never lost." Because like they say in English, "There are more fish in the sea than ever came out of it."

There is always more time than we can ever spend or use, and as far as the utilisation of time is concerned, we do not measure time in seconds and minutes and hours, but, I think, in terms of how much we are able to withdraw from time itself, in time. That is why the Eastern concept of eternity is something which rises beyond time.

Time itself becomes something concrete, something solid, and according to my Master, the only proper utilisation of time is to slip out of its hold. And he used to give me the example of insects which are born and die in probably twenty-four hours, and yet they pass a whole lifetime in those twenty-four hours. They are born, they grow up, they become adult, they mate, they have their own children and they die. So to measure time by the number of years is a purely subjective thing which humans indulge in. My Master's teaching was, "Do not worry about time. It is neither to be used nor misused. It is not to be measured. But we have to, somehow, overcome its hold upon our existence, rise beyond it and go into a dimension from which time itself appears to be like a river flowing on earth." So according to my Master, we must go beyond time.

So that is about time. We have a shortage of time. We have too much of time. We waste time. We utilise time. All these terms and concepts apply essentially to a material existence. Before I came to my Master I used to study some of these ancient texts of the Indians, and it was always, to me, something unbelievable that a rishi could meditate for twenty-five thousand years or fifty thousand years, when a whole human lifetime could not be measured in more than one hundred and twenty years, or even if you want to stretch it to unimaginable limits, two hundred years, four hundred years. But it made sense to me when my Master explained certain aspects of yoga, that when we are able to sit in meditation and go into the depths of our being, we can achieve, it is difficult to say what is that achievement, we can **become**, or evolve into, something which could have taken thousands of years.

And one of the first experiences I had at His holy feet, my Master's feet, was to meditate in His presence. When I had been meditating for nearly one and a half hours and when he said "Stop," I thought it had been just five minutes. And he was very amused. He said, "Look at your watch. You have got a wrist watch?" So what had seemed to me to be five minutes was really one and a half hours. On another occasion I meditated for five minutes. It felt, to me, as if I had been meditating for years, and my Master said, "This is the subjectivity of the nature of time. So do not measure your existence by hours and days and minutes. True life is lived and measured in what it achieves." Therefore we have myths of these little young fellows, rishis, young boys who started *tapasya* at the age of six or seven or eight, and of whom it is said that they are always sixteen. Now this is something, not only very difficult to understand, but which might appear stupid. How can one be, forever, sixteen years old? But it becomes understandable when we think, you know, that for them time has come to a stop. We are still within it. They are outside it.

If you do not accept this idea, it is like trying to give an age to God Himself. How old is God? Is He the number of billions of years that this universe has been in existence? You know, they have some sort of an estimate for the age of the universe which is, I think, varying between fifteen billion and twenty billion years. And some of you may have recently read of the discovery of a new galaxy, the age of which is fixed, very definitely, at fifteen billion years. You see, now comes the question, "If that is fifteen billion, well twenty billion, twenty-five billion, okay, can the Creator have an age for Himself?" We tend to think in purely humanistic terms, that when I was born, my father was twenty-five. The average age of men in India used to be between twenty and twenty-five years when the first child was born. This gives us a rough and ready rule to date the father. "How old are you?" "Forty-five." "Oh, your father must be about seventy." It is a fairly easy conclusion. But forget God, even for rishis there is no age, because when they meditate, as they say, for twenty-five thousand years, at least eighty generations of human beings would have passed them by.

To me, this was all very confusing, sometimes very ununderstandable. I had a very poor opinion of the Hindu tradition. Because my knowledge of the Hindu traditions came from Western writers who had translated the Sanskrit texts, not having studied Sanskrit myself. So we had to depend on people like Monier Williams or Max Mueller and people like that, and their conclusions became my conclusions. So you see, that was the difficulty when you cannot go to the source text, and we depend on interpretations, translator's interpretations, and especially when the translator comes from a totally different culture.

This was the first tragic mistake in my life. Surprisingly, it was science fiction which made me understand that this could be true. Because when you read science fiction and see all the space travel and how, if you are travelling at a velocity near that of light, you can undertake a travel which is for one and one half years, but when you come back to earth there will be nothing. Several thousand or several hundred thousand years could have passed. So this was my first inkling of the nature of time. Unfortunately, like most of the Europeans, I had to come to the knowledge of philosophy through readings of science. But science fiction really opened my eyes to the reality of yoga, and the tradition of yoga. It showed to me that there are two possibilities. One, by trying to approach the speeds or the velocity of light, which says that at the velocity of light, if you are able to exist, there is no more any time.

Time ceases to exist and you have infinite mass. It has to be infinite. At the other end, yoga says, "If you submerge into yourself, go into yourself, you can escape out of the other end of the tube, and you go beyond the limits of the existence of time, in the sense that you go before time itself was created, and instead of becoming of infinite mass, you become, if there is such a possibility, of zero mass." That is what my Master teaches in different terms, that what we call God or the Centre is nothing but the subtlest thing that exists. It is even ridiculous to call it a thing, because a thing must have identity. It must have form. It must have a name. It must have some sort of physical characteristics to define its existence. But about this ultimate existence, all you can say is, "It exists as if it does not exist." Or as my Master used to say, "It has the characteristic of nothingness."

It is important to understand this because in another philosophy, in another scheme of things, there is a definition of the Ultimate as nothing. But here it is not nothing, it cannot be nothing. It is of the character of nothingness. That is, it is something but it is indefinable. It has no qualities, no names, no form, no existence in time, because anything which has an existence in time must cease to exist in that time too. But, mystery of mysteries, everything still comes out of it. And this is also something difficult to understand. How can something come out of nothingness? I was quite happy to see my confusions reflected in a song in the film *The Sound of Music*, where that girl goes around singing, "Nothing comes from nothing. Nothing ever could!" But here is the mystery, you see, that now science has come to a level of understanding, of research, where the very existence of the universe in its original state is supposed to have been what they call a singularity, a dimensionless point of infinite mass, infinite gravity, which exploded at some time and created this enormous universe which is still expanding.

Now I again repeat, that is at one end of existence, the physical end. We try to go back into the other extreme of nothingness, always bringing out something which is also of the character of nothingness. And if this is also incomprehensible, there are examples in science for that too. For instance, the dream of the alchemists, the touchstone as they used to call it, the philosopher's stone, which if you touched, everything turned into gold. But then there is another dream, not of the alchemists but of their, shall we say, more spiritually evolved level of alchemy where they wanted a philosopher's stone, not merely to turn things into gold, but to turn anything it touched into another philosopher's stone. That is real creation.

You see, if you look into the human idea of creation, today's creative ability is very highly evolved, very highly developed. We have the backing of tremendous scientific research, technological development, engineering ingenuity, but, if you like to just think for a moment, we create something which is not us. So the test of real creativity is **can you create something like yourself** at the highest level of your existence. These words 'at the height of your existence' are very necessary because otherwise every one of us could say, "Yes. I have a son, I have a daughter." "He is like me or she is like me." But here again, science fiction comes with its own conception, you see, of a clone, an exact duplicate of yourself. But it is not going to be perfect, it is a duplicate but not perfect.

So in this manner, by eliminating the possibilities of science, of science fiction, of various philosophies, I was able to come to my Master in 1964. It was also very easy for me to understand what he taught me, because my reading in all these unnecessary things had made my mind fit to receive his teaching. When I spoke about this to my Master he said, "Education really means that. Education should not mean teaching you a subject, or granting you degrees, but should essentially mean the training of your mind to work under your direction, and to come to such a level of mental grasp." What we call, you know, to apprehend. That, by applying that mind, you can apprehend the truth of existence, the truth about the universe, the truth even of Divinity, the verity of God itself. And that is not the end of it, either.

The next quality of the mind should be that having known what **is**, as applied to the ultimate existence, to translate it conceptually into what **can be**, and to make yourself the subject of that what-can-be, and to develop yourself by using your mind, and to make it work for your own evolution. Making your mind capable of making you into what-can-be so that by using the mind I become from what I am to what I ought to be.

I remember in Denmark, once, some people asked my Master, "Some people say you are a Master. Some people call you Ram Chandra. Some people call you Babuji. What are you really?" His answer was, "I am what I ought to be." I think it was a radio reporter from the Copenhagen radio. He said, "But are we not all what we should be?" My Master smiled and said, "You are what you are, you are not yet what you should be." This is the small difference between an evolved person and an unevolved person. And it is astonishing that this science of raja yoga makes it possible to realise this. Realisation: the first step of what I am. Then, by using the mind, refining it, training it, regulating it, making it a perfect instrument which I can use for my own evolution, apprehending the reality of the highest existence, and then using that mind again to become what we have to be, that is why it is called raja yoga, you see, because the mind is supposed to be the cream of our human self. It occupies a kingly position in our system. And a king is called 'Raja' in Sanskrit. Therefore it is raja yoga. So this is how the idea of the possibility of evolving by using our own mind to regulate it, train it, and then use it further to become that which we yet are not, came into my idea of a thing which is possible, you see.

And when I came to my Master, I was already about thirty-two or thirty-three years old. And I must have studied these things at least for twenty years before I went to him. And I felt it had all been a tragic waste of time. I told my Master, "Babuji, how much time I have wasted." He smiled and said, "There you are, talking about time again as if it is a commodity. Even time, as you understand it, has no beginning and no end. It is like a river, you see, which is ever flowing with water and, like a river, it has no beginning and end. But even in a river, it is possible to bathe tomorrow if you do not bathe in it today. All that matters is that you get into it and, you know, dive into it." And then he added a good piece of advice, "Instead of sitting and berating yourself for having wasted time, and thus wasting more time, try to use it at least now correctly!"

So you see, when we worry, when we think of what could have been, what might have been, we are really wasting our time. And my Master's definition for worry was 'misdirected thought'. So thought has to be applied to what we have to achieve, unlike most of us who just sit and brood over what we have done and have feelings of guilt and complexities. And we find that most of us are unable to stop that activity of the mind, not because we do not want to, but because we are unable to. Does anyone exist, who does not want to stop worrying? I mean, the modern cry is, "Please bring the working of my mind to a stop if possible." And for this we have all the ways of amusement, of drugs, of stilling the mind by chemical and electrical means, which only makes it weaker and weaker. Because any doctor will tell you, if you are going on stimulating yourself, you are weakening that system. And this is a sad fact perhaps, you see, that however weak our minds may have become, however much we may have lost our control over that mind, which is our own mind, nevertheless there is no other way of regulating that mind except by yourself trying to do it. That is why all other aids, you know, they may give temporary relief, they may show signs of recuperating you and rejuvenating your mental activity, but they fade eventually.

So yoga, raja yoga especially, says, "Sit down." There is a very simple technique to bring your mind under your regulatory apparatus, your control. Slowly train it to apply itself to one thought, and that is meditation. Unfortunately, many people say many things about meditation. And I think the Sanskrit literature itself has to take a substantial degree of blame for it, where instead of talking of meditation, it talks more of concentration. And we hear this cry from human being after human being, "How can I concentrate? My mind is not mine you see. I cannot think of something for two minutes and you are asking me to concentrate." Now, my Master explained this very beautifully. He said, "Meditation is to think continuously of something. It is a process. You have to make the effort and progressively, as you are able to hold your mind on that thought for longer and longer periods of time, you come to a state where the mind is totally on that, you see, and that is concentration."

So concentration is the result of a process. Concentration is a state of mind. Unfortunately most people, I think almost all people, talk of concentration as if they are, you know, creating coffee in a coffee machine, using the physical analogy of creating a concentrated solution, boiling off the water. Now you may not find it easy to believe, but I can tell you many of the abhyasis of my Master, his disciples, have been able to reach a state of *samadhi* within a few months of their starting their practice. Whereas, if you read the traditional yogic literature of India, you read that Vishwamitra meditated twenty-five thousand years, Vasishta meditated fifty thousand years. We are confused, you see. "How is it possible? Am I really in a state of *samadhi*?" And yet it is a fact. It happens, you see, because when you do something right, how much time should it take to give you the result? It should not take any time at all. As my Master said, "If you know how to meditate, the instant you close your eyes you should be in *samadhi*." And perhaps you will permit me to say, that nowadays I am very often in this situation that, if I close my eyes, I am liable to slip into *samadhi* and not wake up again. This started soon after I started my Master's method.

I was in a music performance and my wife was sitting next to me listening to the music. I closed my eyes and when my wife shook me awake the concert was over. She was very angry with me. She said, "You know everybody was looking at you. You come to an expensive concert and you are sleeping here." I could never convince her that I was not sleeping. And when I told my Master about this, he laughed. He said, "The explanation is so simple. By meditation you have trained your mind to concentrate. Now when you concentrate on something the mind goes into a state of absorption, and there you are. That is what happens."

So you see, Sahaj Marg is a system which can give you this state, which is so highly praised in Patanjali's system, the culmination of yogic endeavour, the eighth and final step, *samadhi*. My Master used to think not very highly of *samadhi*. He said, "What is the use of *samadhi*? All right, you have achieved it. You have seen it. What is the use of it? If you go into *samadhi* and come out of it the same person who went into it, it is as good as a dirty man going into a river and coming out as dirty as he went in." So, in our system of Sahaj Marg as it is called, the natural way, there is very little value for the state of *samadhi,* except as an indicator that you now have your mind very much under your regulation. And as my Master used to say, "Now begins true yoga." So meditation, *samadhi*, these are states, you see, which have no real relevance to evolution. And my Master's conviction was that all the yogic research of the past had stopped at *samadhi* and not gone beyond it. That is what he has been teaching us.

Here we do not believe in *samadhi*. If it happens, it happens. Like we fall asleep, we wake up again. It is not the aim of our yogic *sadhana*. Here the aim of our *sadhana* or what we call practice, is to become subtler and subtler, throwing off our grossness, and finally reaching that ultimate state of divinisation. While still remaining a human being, we can still parallel the divine existence, by being inside of the essence of nothingness, ourselves. So that is the goal of the Sahaj Marg system which we are trying to practise.

Here I would like to say something more about the traditional yoga, not to create any problems or differences, but to tell you very definitely, you see, that yoga as it is practised today in the West, also in the East, because in India we find these yogis standing on their heads and doing all sorts of *asanas* on the banks of various rivers, what they achieve is perhaps physical fitness, for which there is no importance at all. Some of them achieve a degree of psychic control that is really marvellous to see. But as my Master said, "Where is it going to lead them?" Many of them develop clairvoyant powers. And my Master used to say, "Today you have the telephone and the television. You can literally speak over thousands of miles, see things over thousands of miles." And then he related to me a story of Adi Shankaracharya, you see, who is supposed to have lived in the ninth century. He is the founder of *advaita vedanta,* as you know it today, a system of philosophy which was made very widely available in this world by Ramakrishna Paramahamsa and his great disciple Swami Vivekananda. It is said that one man who had been practicing hatha yoga for sixty years came to Shankaracharya and was very pleased about himself. Shankaracharya asked him, "What is it that you have achieved? What is the thing that you think is not achievable by anybody else which you have achieved?" He said, "After sixty years of this Swami, I can fly like a bird." Shankaracharya laughed and said, "Every bird does it without practising sixty years. And perhaps you have accumulated enough *samskara* that you are going to be reborn as a bird in your next life." This was a comment in the ninth century. We are in the twentieth, entering the twenty-first, you see.

So human nature has not changed. Aspiration has not changed in the sense that we still want things which we can see, which we can feel, which we can weigh. But unfortunately, real raja yoga promises things which cannot be weighed, or seen, or felt, or touched, in any manner whatsoever. Many people used to ask my Master, "How to judge a spiritual person? How to know who is spiritual and who is not?" He said, "If you see half a dozen people on the street, can you say who is educated and who is not? If they are silent and do not say anything, and the fool happens to be well-dressed and the wise man is not dressed well, you might make the very common mistake of thinking the well-dressed man to be the wise man."

So when even education cannot be judged from the outside unless the man is willing to talk to you, discuss, and show his knowledge of affairs, how are you going to judge such a subtle thing like spiritual growth, spiritual development? Nevertheless, he gave us a test, you see. When you sit next to a really spiritually evolved person you must feel one thing, and that is that for the time you are with him, the working of your mind must be stilled, and you feel a calmness which you could not feel otherwise. So that is the first test. So hatha yoga with its manifestations, enormous powers, supreme powers sometimes like the *kundalini*, gives us nothing more than the powers, like the horrible powers that science has given us today, starting with gunpowder and going on to the neutron bombs.

You see, strangely enough there is also a trend from the gross to the subtle, even in the destructive powers of science. Because if you shoot a laser gun at someone there is really nothing which is coming out of it. So I am giving this example only to show, you see, that science and our yoga are heading in the same direction, or at least appear to be going in the same direction. But I would humbly suggest they are going in opposite directions of subtlety. Because, as everybody knows, power can be used in either way. In this external way we use it for destruction, when it is turned the other way upon ourselves it is for evolution. Both go to subtle limits. And we have one of these science fiction horrors, you see, that you just press a button and aim it at the centre of the galaxy, and all that you have to do is to shift the atoms of that configuration a little, that force radiates outwards, and the entire matter of the galaxy is thrown out and scattered into the universe after being pulverized into its ultimate constituent parts.

So you see, that works from centre outwards to destroy. Yoga works from outward inwards, bringing the senses inside, bringing the power of the mind inside, bringing the powers of the body inside, and trying to sort of condense perhaps, to bring everything together in one point and make that centre your centre of existence. So this is the aim of raja yoga. Not the acquisition of physical powers, mental powers, psychic powers. In fact, all of you would have read the warnings of the great saints of the past, "Do not fall into these traps of making miracles, or of power utilisation, because in that way lies destruction of the self." I mean any saint worth his name, whether of the Orient or the Occident, has said this. They have all said the same thing. But still the temptation to power, the temptation to manifesting power, is so strong that this temptation is sometimes difficult to overcome. You find that, at its lowest level of manifestation, it is nothing but the ego's desire to become more and more grand, more and more flamboyant as you say. We have this desire to expand our private empires, business empires, political empires, and today's talk in all business schools, in all technocratically oriented society, is only about expansion. "How much has your business expanded this year?" I know because I have been a business executive for thirty-three years, and retired only a couple of years back. And this was the daily nightmare. "How much has your sales gone up? How much is your production up? What is the capital needed tomorrow?" And so half the night I dreamt of, you know, five year cash flows, five year projections of sales, manufacturing schedules. And I used to be considered really good at my job. Nevertheless, success was always elusive. Because as they have this old saying, "The best laid plans of mice and men often go awry."

So there is always this element of uncertainty in what we do, notwithstanding the best computer aids, computer generated plans, computer generated futuristic, you know, what they call parameters of existence, and how and when things can go wrong. And the recent tragic instance, you know, when an air bus on a routine flight, civilian flight, was destroyed because the latest technology available did not give time for the man to think. Which only says, "Please think before you do anything." And that is an old wisdom, you see, think first and then act. And do not make the mistake of trying to parallel the computer in its working, that it can do sixty-four million calculations in a second, I must do sixty-four at least.

So you see, to come back to the subject, this goes outward, we go inward. The physical world demands expansion, the yogic world demands a contraction into yourself, until you reach that point where you can say, "There is nothingness in me." I think that is why this yoga business is so difficult to accept. It is not that yoga is unknown. In fact I would hazard the statement that there are more yoga schools in Europe than I have ever seen in India. But we stop at one point. We stop with hatha yoga, *pranayama*. These are after all only the first four steps of Patanjali's yoga and we do not want to go beyond, precisely because up to that stage it is like climbing a mountain, it is exhilarating. And who exists who does not want to stay forever at the top of the mountain, the beautiful air, you know, the crystal clear air? But having gone up we have to come down. There we accept it, because our home is there. My Master said, "My dear friend, in yoga, too, your home is there. After all this expansion into science, into education, into knowledge, into wisdom, you have to contract back into that originality of yourself which, being divine, is the source of everything but is nothing in itself. You have to become that again."

So that is why raja yoga is not very popular. People read about it. Swami Vivekananda's book is very famous, but we want to stop at the top of the mountain, not go down again. That is why, I think, in drugs they call it a high. And we make the tragic mistake always, you see, of trying to sustain and experience everything at its high point, which is what addiction to anything does. Smokers know they smoke one cigarette, they feel something, then they smoke a second one trying to keep it up, inevitably we lose that. Those who drink know the same thing happens.

There is an old saying which I heard in England when I was a boy that, "First man drinks the bottle, then the bottle drinks the bottle, and finally the bottle drinks the man." And this is what happens in every addiction, whether it is to knowledge, whether it is to wealth. That which we started out to master eventually will master us. And that is only another way of saying that we become slaves of these things. And the biggest slavery, as my Master said again and again, is the slavery to success. You know it is a most tragic, heartbreaking, sort of slavery that the successful man is worse than unsuccessful people. Normal people like us want to be successful. We dream of becoming successful, but the successful man's nightmares are how to continue to remain at that level of success.

And therefore, you have these funny examples of a tennis court called the Wimbledon where year after year they want to remain at the top, pull their muscles, break their backs, and break their hearts, eventually. It is very easy to give up a bad physical habit, but very difficult to give up mental holds, you see, which we have acquired, like the idea of success, like the idea of being at the top of something. Because they are subtler than the physical world, they have a bigger hold upon us. Therefore yogic science has always warned us, "Do not go for success!" People here should not be shocked, because yoga only makes a distinction between success at something and growing into something. Evolution and success are too different things. Yoga warns us that success means something temporary which is an achievement which can be lost, whereas evolution is something which is ongoing, progressive, eternal, endless. And therefore the wise man should seek evolution rather than success.

So that is the logic with which the great rishis, the great mystics, gave us as they left the material world as something ephemeral and merged into the inner mystic life. And strangely enough they are, even today, remembered with reverence, with love. And it is said of such great people that the devil himself came to tempt them. Ordinary people are tempted by a little money or a bottle of wine, but these great saints had to be tempted by the devil himself. Whether it was Christ or Buddha or Mohammed there was always this temptation. And in our Hindu system of the yogic thought it is said that, "This devil which tempts you is inside yourself." There can be no such thing as a devil which comes from outside to tempt you to fight against the powers of God. That which bedevils us, as we say in English, is our own inner cravings, our lusts, our temptations as we call them. And my Master explained this very beautifully. He said, "Suppose six people are sitting here. They are not all tempted by the same thing. Why? If the thing itself was tempting then all should succumb to that temptation." When I asked him for the reason he said, "If there is something in you which responds to that which is outside, you succumb to that particular temptation. And because inside you, you are unwilling to accept the truth that you are the cause of your temptation, you blame the external cause." And he said, "It is as stupid as blaming the mirror for showing you your face." He said, "If your face is ugly, what can the mirror do about it?"

So when we see these temptations outside it must mirror the inner condition of the being. "Ah ha, this is the defect I have in me which is responding to this external situation," not a stimulation, a situation. So, according to my Master, this ultimate temptation when the devil seems to appear before us and tempt us with unlimited life, unlimited dominion over the universe, unlimited number of children, the ultimate pleasures of life, it is nothing but the quintessence of all the secret things that lie deeply buried in us, coming out finally. And that was one of the greatest psychological truths he taught me. That we bury, deep in our hearts, the most frightening, most horrible, most shameful things and they come out last.

I had an experience after about ten or twelve years of meditation with him. I was sitting in meditation, I was supposed to have reached fairly high levels of, what shall I say, spirituality according to my Master. And in that meditation, you know, one of the goddesses of the Hindu pantheon, Gayathri as we call her, she appeared as if in answer to a prayer. Then she started disrobing herself, taking off the sari, taking off the blouse. I was shocked. A goddess! And I was so ashamed, I said, "What is happening to me? It is as if you are in a strip tease club." So I immediately rushed to my Master. I took a week's holiday from my company. I live in Madras. He lived in the North. I said, "Babuji, I do not know what has happened to me, but I seem to have reached the lowest point of my evolution, and you are praising my evolution." Then he was quite perturbed, you see, because he knows I am always serious, and he said, "What happened?" Now you know, I was finding it difficult to explain this to him. How to tell your guru, your Master? I had to tell him. Then he patted me on the shoulder and said, "Do not worry. Because the most shameful things are hidden deepest in the mind and I am glad that this has come out because now you are free."

So you see, we have to understand yogic science, yogic techniques, yogic manifestations, in the correct way, because on that day, if I had not had my Master to tell my experience to, and receive his clarification, I would have left yoga forever. I mean I was frightened, you see. What is this stupid thing happening? Things which I have never seen in my dreams when I was eighteen and twenty, I am seeing when I am forty-five. So you see, my Master said, "Remember that to interpret a yogic experience is a very dangerous thing, and it requires a Master to do it."

So that brings us to the need for a Master in our yogic existence, because often people ask us, "Why do I need a Master?" Precisely for these things. A Master is a Master in what? You know, you used to have this old tradition of, what was it called, freemasons, and I believe it started with the artisans. The best of everything banded together and became an order of masonry. So a Master is one who has mastered his subject. And here the subject is spirituality. Now if you want to learn history you go to a history teacher, you want to learn geography you go to a teacher of geography. I do not know why people rebel against going to a Master of spirituality when they want to learn spirituality. Perhaps it is because, generally, they have no degrees after their names. All the others have. They are professors, assistant professors, and we go by these printed diplomas and the letters of the alphabet they have after their names.

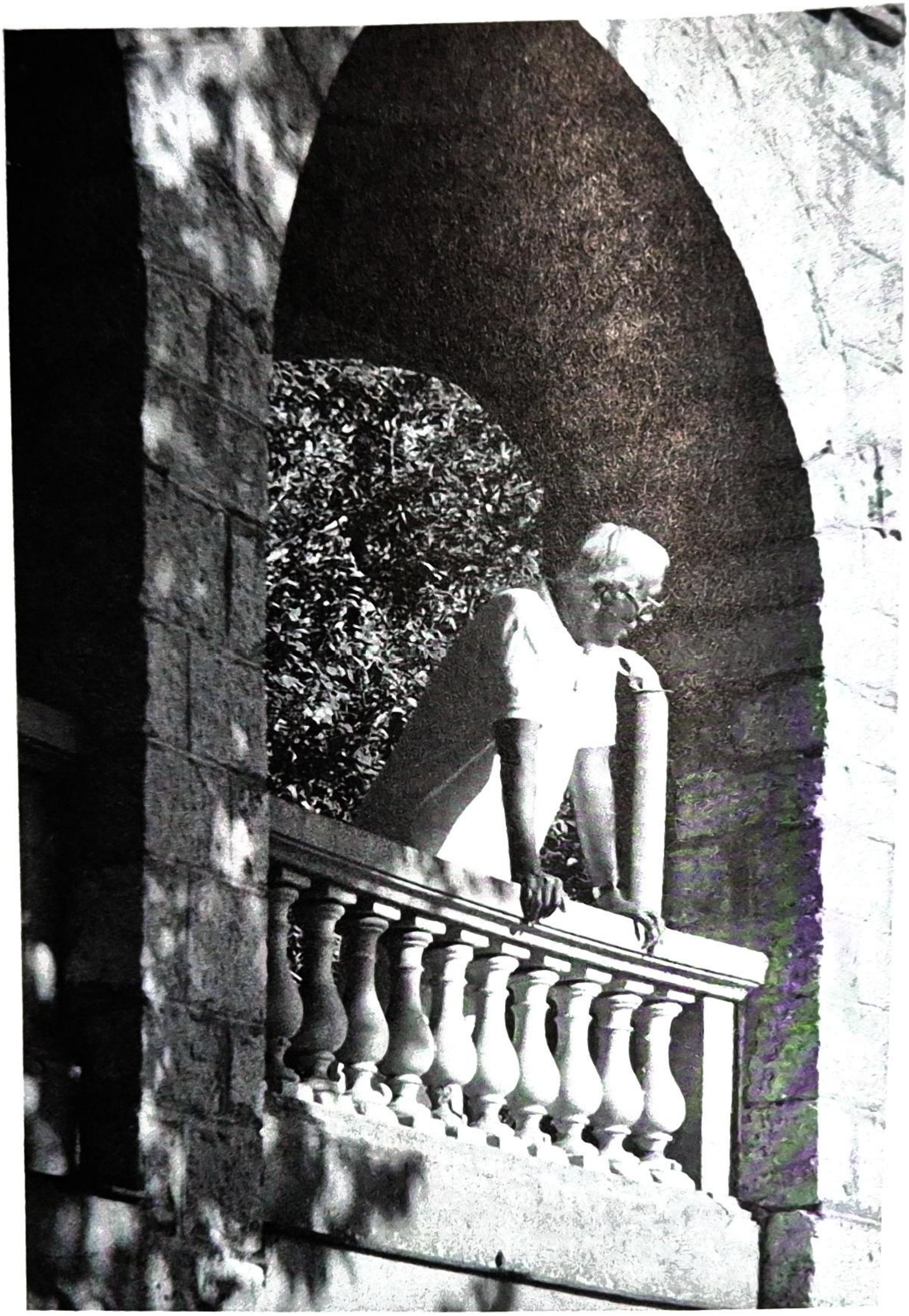
And that is another thing my Master told me. We only judge things by the externals. We never look inside. We look at the outside of a fruit, at the face of a person, the thickness of his wallet. And if, today, modern life has become so unstable, undependable, and human relationships have become so tenuous, and often non-existent, it is because, instead of looking into the heart for the qualities there, we look at the externals. So you see, spirituality takes us into the ultimate core of existence. Look inside. Look inside yourself first. Turn your senses, your mind, all your facilities inwards. Is the outer universe vast? Twenty million light years in extent. This universe inside is even vaster. It has no limit at all. You know to bigness there can be a limit, to smallness can there be limit? How small can the smallest be?

I once read a story when I was young, which gave me the secret much later, thirty years, forty years later. It concerns an object which you know, when you rub, it produces a genie who could bring you anything you wanted. And the only way of getting rid of that object was to sell it cheaper than the price you paid for it. The first man bought it for a billion dollars and progressively it comes down. Hundred dollars, fifty dollars, twenty dollars, ten dollars, one cent. And the owner now does not know what to do with it. There is nothing smaller than the cent. Then some economist gave him the funny idea, you know, convert into lira, for instance. And if a cent is worth hundred and twenty liras, sell it at hundred and nineteen lira. Eventually it comes to one lira, he does not know what to do now. Then the story goes that he went to a saint who said, "Give it away." This secret nobody was able to master, because you are going by this principle that you must sell it cheaper. And he just threw it into a river, and it was over.

So you see, to smallness there is no limit. Bigness, yes. How big can something be? Sometimes you find children arguing, "My father is bigger than yours." And generally it starts with the argument and ends with the fists. So this business of yoga, you see, when we turn everything inwards, we come to this marvellous revelatory experience that what we thought was infinitely small is really the source of the infinitely great, and there lies true existence, at the heart of existence as we say.

So this is the adventure that we undertake in our yogic system. And to still the body we sit in a pose which we call an *asana*. To still the mind you take an object of meditation, in our case it is light in the heart, divine light in the heart. So in a sense, you can say we are opposing the natural tendencies of human existence from activity to inaction, from super-abundant thought to almost thoughtlessness, from excessive breathing to almost a suspension of breathing. And then as my Master said, "When you really touch that point once, then you can say your journey is coming to an end, because now it begins to grip you." And then we start diving deeper and deeper into that and eventually reach a stage when you are neither here nor there, nor there, and yet you are everywhere. And that is the definition of God. He who is everywhere in all things. Bigger than the biggest, smaller than the smallest. You know, all these rather confusing definitions.

So yogic science pinpoints the only possibility of human evolution up to the highest levels, is by going inside. By going outside, you may master the universe, you may colonize the systems of the galaxies but, like cancer, we only breed more and more of the same cells. So this is what I have to say about our system of yoga. If some of you are interested in it, you are welcome. We are here for a whole week more, and I welcome you all to these experiments. Thank you.



9

A Master is Everywhere

Courmettes, France
August 27, 1993

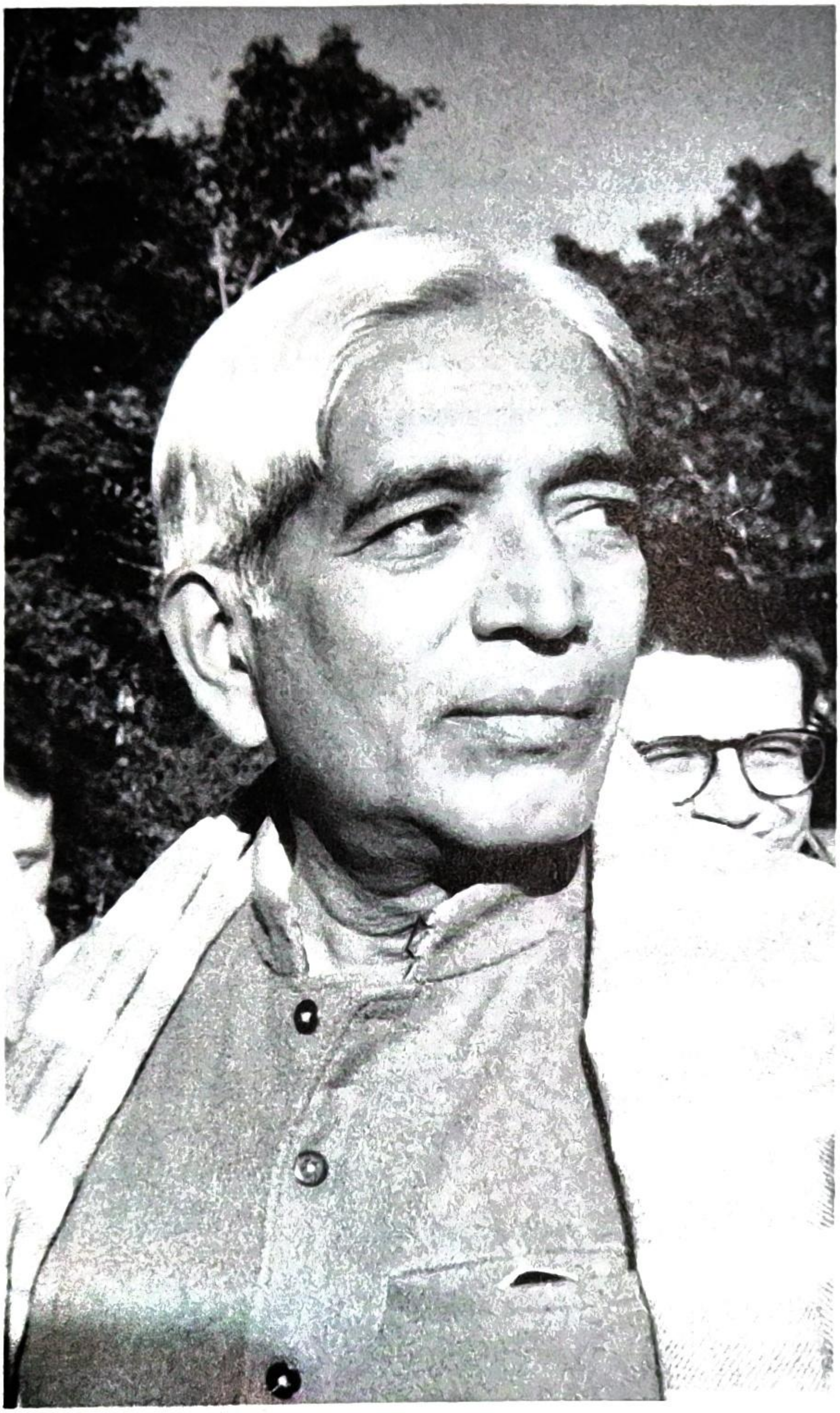
I received a letter two days back from a girl in Delhi. She was very angry with me because she says, "We have not seen you for five months," and she made a very good suggestion. She said, "You stay abroad and visit India for three months every year. [laughter] In that way we shall see a little more of you than we are seeing you now." So I wrote to her something which goes a little beyond what Patrick told you just now. Patrick said you have all learned to hear the voice of the Master inside. I wrote to that girl that she should also learn to see the Master inside. So that is one advice I have to give you, also. We have to see the Master, we have to hear the Master, inside our hearts.

Another question I have been asked here in the last two, three days. "Are you sorry to leave Courmettes?" Now, for me Courmettes has no meaning. If it is, if I have to feel anything, I must feel sorry to leave you all. Well I mean, what is Courmettes to me, or Nice or Paris? So we should also learn to not attach ourselves to places because, as I wrote to another abhyasi in India, another girl, I said, "There is no India and Europe for us." We do not feel sorry when we leave one room of the house and go into the next room, nor do we feel happy going into the next room. It is all our home. Because otherwise we would find what is happening now, as we move on we will leave a trail of sadness behind us. In fact that has become something of the human nature today that, as human beings pass, they leave sorrow and destruction behind them. And that is a very bad thing. So, when we become spiritualized, good abhyasis, we should leave happiness, joy and contentment behind us. It is like a rose which is taken out of a room. We may feel sorry the rose is gone, but we do not lose the fragrance. So we must always leave the fragrance behind. So what is the use if you have a bunch of Singapore paper flowers, or plastic flowers, in a room. It makes no difference whether they are there, or whether they are removed. Neither their presence nor their absence makes any difference.

Now here we are always talking of the presence of the Master. Of course, when he is physically present, it is an occasion for joy and reunion. But, if the Master is worth anything, nobody can ever feel his absence. Because there is something he leaves behind, which is perhaps even more than his physical presence. And we have all felt this with Babuji. I mean, I had always expected to feel a terrible sorrow when he left. And I knew that, I mean, even in Paris in August 1982, even before that, we could see that the end was near. Now when we know that somebody is going, we know it well in advance. We feel more and more sorrow, until you come to the climax of that sorrow with the departure of the person. But here was the miracle, you see, that when Babuji passed away I did not feel any particular sorrow. Of course there was the emotion. I certainly missed his physical presence, but there was no void in my heart. Now, that is the real Master, that he goes but leaves himself behind. And it is not enough for just one Master to be like that.

When Babuji said, "I do not make slaves but I make Masters," that is what he meant. Not that every abhyasi can become the Master of Sahaj Marg, or the President of the Mission, but we can flower into such a spiritual genius that, when we leave a place, we are still there. Only of such a person can it be said that, "He is present everywhere." That is why you feel this enormous, mysterious thing, that Babuji's presence is felt everywhere, not only in Shahjahanpur or Madras or in Timbuktoo. Now with material things this limitation is there, you see, and a rose can leave its fragrance only where it was, but a Master is everywhere. His physical presence may be somewhere, but his spiritual presence must be everywhere. And the more he travels, and the more he walks and goes, it is only to strengthen that presence, and to leave such a strength of presence behind that persons can never go away.

So you see, this is the lesson of spirituality, that we should go somewhere. When we go, we do not go, but we remain there in such a way that people can feel that He is still here. And as we develop, the feeling should be there, stronger and stronger, until we can feel that He is always there. So you see, this is the secret of the spiritual presence. The body is a thing of the moment. It is there for a few years and inevitably it goes. But it must leave itself behind, as a tangible presence in the atmosphere, and as a very real purpose in the hearts of those who have been touched by the presence. And I think that is the secret of spiritual development, of growth. So I pray that such a thing may happen to all of you, by the Master's Grace. Thank you.



10

Sensitivity

Villeneuve le Roi, France
August 28, 1988

Sensitivity is being conscious of what is happening to us, not necessarily of what is happening around us. When we first become sensitive, naturally we are sensitive only to that to which we are ordinarily exposed, which is the outer world. So we hear things more clearly and even if a spoon drops, the meditation is disturbed. But as the attention goes inwards, then sensitivity starts working in our favour. We become more sensitive to the inner reality, and then whatever the noise, this does not disturb us. So sensitivity is good, but it is troublesome if you continue to remain attracted to the outside world.

I would like to say some more things about, a few more words about, sensitivity which you will not find in books. This is my personal experience. When I started meditation, I used to be quite disturbed by a lot of things. As I was saying, even if a spoon falls on the ground, it is as if, you know, there is an explosion somewhere. And naturally, when you are disturbed you become irritated and that breaks your meditation. And I used to get up and go away. So we have no sadhana like that. I know women know this thing very well, that when the husband is sometimes very angry, even when they are eating they get up and go away. In India it is very common. [laughter] They just get up and walk away. You can eat afterwards. But meditation lost means it is lost.

So I had to find a way of overcoming this. And I asked Babuji, my Master, "What should I do?" He said, "Ignore all these things." But the problem was, on one hand we get more sensitive, and yet we have to ignore some things. How is it possible? That is when we have to be more attentive to the inside and turn your attention inwards. And people ask, "How is this possible?" Take interest! Because like, you know, you look through binoculars at what you want to look. Imagine the whole outside universe is available for us and yet we are able to pick out what we want, what we want to see, or what we want to listen to. And Babuji said, "This is possible. Here there is no need to choose or to select, there is only one. And why cannot you turn your attention inside?"

So it is not difficult. It is a question of taking interest in the inner life. I found a very remarkable change, you see, that when I was able to turn my attention inside, sensitivity developed faster. And as the sensitivity increased, the attraction for the inner life became more and more, so that the inner turning became more and more perfect. And then I found a third stage which is very interesting, that when I was absorbed inside — you know, in Sahaj Marg we have no total *samadhi* like in hatha yoga — we are always aware of what is going on outside. We have to be! That is the definition of *sahaj samadhi*. But the remarkable thing is that even though I was sensitive to the outside, I was more sensitive to the inside. And now when I heard something outside, it did not disturb me any more. It seemed to divert my attention more inside. It was actually helpful to me to turn my attention even more inside.

Now, please remember that when you are navigating a plane or a ship, for instance, everything you see outside helps you to orient your course better and better. Suppose you are on a ship and the captain is attracted by another ship, and he changes course. You would not think much of that captain. No! But on the contrary, everything he sees outside helps him to fix his course, even to a finer extent than before. And actually in the old days, before radar and things like that, they had what they call the sextant, you know, with which they used to take observation of the sun to calculate the latitude. And with the time, which they had a perfect clock on board the ship, they had the longitude. And the two helped them to fix their position exactly.

So, in some similar fashion, when we get deeper and deeper into the inner life, actually all these disturbances help us to go even more deep inside. And then I found what I consider to be perhaps the last stage, perhaps not, because there is never a last stage, that actually these noises, disturbances as we call them, they create a sense of wonder. And that is when we begin to look at the outside world with a sense of wonder. No more curiosity, no more indulgence, no more pleasure-seeking, but with a sense of wonder. And my Master, Babuji, said that is the beginning of the divine condition, that everything evokes our wonder, because all is God's creation. Even a plane is God's creation. Man is only the instrument of that creation.

So instead of creating disturbance, and instead of creating annoyance, now we look at everything with wonder. And that is said to be the state of original innocence. Why is it considered to be the state of original innocence? Everything creates wonder. No more disturbance, no more annoyance, no more greed, no more lust, you know, everything you look at is wonderful. And it is said that that is the condition when God from within you looks at His own creation, and wonders at His own creation. "Have I created so many beautiful things?"

In fact I consider that, you know, when a couple have their first child, that baby creates a sense of wonder, especially in the father. I mean, he may be anything, he may be a brute, he may be a hulking fellow, he may be a handsome man, but he says, "My baby." For the woman, there is not so much of that, because it is part of herself. And it is very natural for a woman to have a baby. They love that creation. Man wonders at his creation. And perhaps that is why God is always referred to as He, you see, not She. Yes, because He wonders at his creation. And in the Gita, you know, one of the very famous texts, it is said of the person who has achieved the spiritual perfection, that the only sense left in him is a sense of wonder.

So that is what we should remember when we become sensitive, because I find in Europe many people are afraid of sensitivity. We must be afraid only when it is turned to the wrong thing. I was told, last year, when I was in Château D'Oex, and the year before that when I was in New Jersey, in the United States, that they have these fire warning systems which work on smoke and very often, when it is too sensitive, they switch it off because people are smoking and it starts working, sounding the warning. Of course, it looks ridiculous that you are sensitive and therefore you turn off your sensitivity not to perceive something. Now if you forget to turn on that warning system again, you may have a fire and never know about it.

So sensitivity should not be switched off. On the contrary, we need to refine it more and more, to perfect it. And in the spiritual voyage, turn it inside. You know, that is why the old, the good old Pole Star, used to be so important in navigation. The only object in the heavens which was fixed, and by which, when the sun is not there, in the night they took a fix, for fixing the north.

So we need sensitivity, we need an object on which to hook that sensitivity, and then your course is set permanently.

And other things outside which divert your attention momentarily, instead of disturbing you, help you to correct your course if there is any variation, so that very soon and very quickly and very fast, you arrive at your destination.

That's all.

11

Inauguration of the Augerans Ashram

Augerans, France
September 10, 1988

I am supposed to speak a little. It has been announced, so I will try to say something. First of all, I would like to say that today is a day of great happiness for all of us, the people of Europe especially, because you have all made the Master happy, and offered him the possibility of serving the people of Europe in a greater fashion, better way. And this would not have been possible without your love and devotion. My Master used to say that ashrams are not built of brick and mud, but of the blood of hearts.

So you see, an ashram is a very sacred edifice. And every heart must bleed before such an edifice can be built properly. And my Master used to say, "Money, anybody can get and give." We have so many great foundations in this world which can give not only millions, but perhaps billions of dollars. But what they do with all those billions, whether it is of much significance to human beings, whether they offer anything more than education and health, you all know. And are education and health so valuable? Because a saint is supposed to have neither.

Saints live and have wisdom. And that a life should be healthy is a merely human conception. Particularly, it is a European conception, because you do not find this conception of health so much in the East. What is valued in the East, is wisdom and spiritual growth. And therefore we have the ancient system of a guru living in an ashram. An ashram being a place where spiritual education and spiritual practice are offered, a large number of disciples living together in harmony, and everything that is necessary for the ashram being produced by co-operative effort. Often these ashrams were deep in the jungles of India, you see, and they were isolated communities. They were exclusive in the sense that those who were willing to pass through their portals, never came out again. Only such people entered them. Because it used to be the tradition that a disciple who entered when he was young did not come out as the same person. He came out a transformed individual, a *rishi*.

So this was the function of the ashrams. They had no luxury. They were rarely solid buildings. Mostly they were structures of bamboo and wood with thatched roofs, offering the minimum of security and protection from the climate. Thanks to our Master, we have a much better edifice than they ever had. And compared to those ashrams, our ashrams today are luxurious. I remember when our Shahjahanpur ashram was built, Babuji was almost wonder-struck with the so-called luxury of that place. Many of you have seen that ashram, and all that it provided was basic amenities, cement floors instead of mud floors, brick walls instead of mud walls, and a solid roof. And we had only cold water to start with, even in winter. And I remember how much we used to enjoy those days, because in some way after the hot water boiler was put in, it spoiled that atmosphere. And only yesterday someone was telling me that when that very crude boiler which burned wood was put up, my Master took everybody there to see it and said, "This is the latest technology that I have put in here." So, that was his idea of the ashram.

We should go back and think, "What must have been a real ashram of the earlier days?" And we must remember my Master's advice, that comfort should be at minimum levels, not too much comfort in the bed, preferably cold water in the showers, simple food, then our minds remain on the spiritual life. Otherwise we expect *croissant* and *baguette* for breakfast, and pizza and most crisp salads for lunch. There is no harm in eating good food, but we should not expect it.

So Babuji advised abhyasis to sleep on the floor at least once in a week. Remove the mattress and sleep. And sometimes sleep out in the open. And he told me how once he had to go urgently to Lalaji in Fatehgarh. It was probably the end of December, or the first or second day of January, bitterly cold. He arrived at Lalaji's house at nine-thirty in the evening. And finding the door closed, he did not even knock, because he did not want to disturb his Master. He slept on the stone step outside the gate, with no bed, nothing to cover himself with, but just as he was.

So you see, spirituality is not something which is easily won. Nowadays, it has become the fashion to think we are all very devoted, we are all very serious about spirituality. And people who take three hours away from their work to come and meet the Master, they have the feeling that they are obliging the Master by their presence. It is in a way true, because if they did not come, in some way the Master's work would be incomplete. So the Master has always to be obliged to the disciples, even if they come only for ten minutes, because it gives him the opportunity to do what he has come for, you see, to serve them.

So this is the old tradition of the guru-disciple relationship. And the traditional relationship was nurtured in an ashram. Many ancient saints have applauded the idea of an ashram as giving an opportunity to young aspirants to live in personal contact with their guru, to serve the guru and be served by him, creating an atmosphere of humility, of love, learning the real knowledge from the Master, how to live this life in such a way that the life hereafter is an assured one in that *puissance* of divine glory, you see, which we call liberation, realisation, merger with the Infinite, stage by stage.

I remember Babuji telling me that Lalaji used to call an ashram, "A doorway into eternity." So I hope this ashram will be one of the first doors outside India, and in due course many such doors will come up so that people of Europe, people of the West, the Occident, will find it possible to slip, very easily, from this life into the next life with ease, with facility, and without having to undergo all the old tortures of body and mind that the ancient ones had to undergo.

We must be grateful to the Master for providing to us, today, such a simple way, you see, where without much effort, much meditation, much cleaning, I mean, much of anything, we are able to achieve that glorious goal. And I hope all of you will at least put in the minimum effort and help Him to help you. Thank you.

12

The Way of the Heart

Paris, France
October 3, 1988

Good evening.

Generally it is difficult to know where to start. The subject is big and the ancient and traditional literature is enormous, and it has so many ramifications, bifurcations. So like a river, you know, which starts with a lot of rivers flowing into it and at the end, also, it again divides into many streams. My short talk may be like that, you see, going here and there, because I have to try and assemble the various streams of thought which flow into one central idea, and try to get across to you this idea of the heart.

When I went to my Master, Shri Ram Chandraji Maharaj, in 1964, I had studied something of Hindu philosophy from the English and the German authors. And having an aspiration for spiritual growth, I had also started to practise some hatha yoga, *asanas*, *pranayama,* on my own. So it was with a jumbled background of half-baked knowledge and a little practise, that I met my Master. And it was not a good foundation, because the first difficulty was that I had to understand on the basis of what I had already learned. That is how we all grow. One cannot say it is right, one cannot say it is wrong, but if the foundation is shaky the superstructure will also not be very good. And I faced that difficulty with my Master. Because I had expected his teaching to build upon what I already knew. And when we have this problem of having to break down our own earlier foundations, whether it is of knowledge, or of actual physical buildings, it is troublesome, it is difficult, it is expensive. And most problematical is the sort of injury you get to the ego. Because for me, it was not easy to accept that my past learning was not really worthwhile, because apart from the fact that it had the backing of so many other systems of thought, there was this feeling that I had invested so much of my time and my effort into that process of learning. It was as difficult as having to close down a business and write off the capital that we have already put in before we start something new.

But my Master was most loving and most kind but, like a surgeon, he was also ruthless. Ruthless because it was for my good. It is no good having a surgeon who will weep with us when he has to cut into our insides or cut out the outsides. He has to be very kind and gentle, put us to sleep if necessary, and then operate. So this was the first lesson I learned with my Master, that I had to unlearn everything. So I made a quick survey of what I had to unlearn first.

Now we started off with the understanding that everything in life evolves. Evolution is a force which cannot be stopped. It is a movement which cannot be stopped, whether it is individual, or a whole race, or a whole system of existence. And my Master said, "Well, there are many lives, many levels of existence where apparently there is evolution but there is no true evolution." Yet we have in business this idea of horizontal growth and vertical growth, a change of dimension. It is not enough to learn more and more of the same thing, but we have to learn more and more of more things. And then we come to that final conclusion, that we have to give up everything and come to the seed thought from which everything evolves. And my Master's teaching was, "Find that seed."

It is nice to have a big tree with a lot of branches and twigs and leaves. It looks very nice, very ornamental, and gives us fruit. But if we want a new tree we start with a seed, or what we call in philosophic parlance, the seminal thought. It was his wisdom and his teaching to me, that unless we throw away everything else, we do not come to the seed. And that seed is often very tiny, very small, not very significant, and does not look very grand.

So we have to give up these ideas, grand ideas, of enough knowledge, sufficient knowledge. I mean great knowledge. And the second thought he gave me, was of a key which opens a whole palace. Without the key the palace is closed to us. So we call it a seed or a key, a key to a solution, a key to a problem. And my introduction to his teaching was, "Everything you have learned you have to now dissolve." Not because it was not useful or it was wrong, but because it was not useful for the purpose for which I had gone to him, which was spiritual evolution to the highest possible levels.

So that is where my education began, you see, and there we had an examination, very critical examination and analysis, which I had to undergo by myself, because my Master did not believe in discussions. He did not conduct theoretical classes. He believed in giving a seed thought and allowing us to take it into our heart and make it grow. Now that was a strange concept for me, you see, that you have to accept a thought in your heart and make it grow. Because we generally associate knowledge with the intellect, with the brain. But my Master, with a most, what shall I say, amused smile, said, "That is the common understanding, that the intellect is in the brain and associated with the things like that. But the real understanding comes not from the brain, but from the heart." And that is why when we say we understand something, if we do not understand it with the heart, then it is just an intellectual offering, it is of no use to us.

Even in very abstruse subjects, subjects like mathematics for instance, which are supposed to be rigorously scientific, highly intellectual, his teaching was that if that streak of intuition, you know, that spark of intuition, did not come, there would be no development of these sciences, there would have been no development of these sciences. And intuition does not come through intellectual processes, but is something which evolves inside, you see, without our actually participating in conscious thought. And he said, "If the heart is interested in the solution of the problem, and if we try to analyze and respond to situations through the heart, understanding becomes easier, because then the brain or intellectual process becomes so pure that it responds automatically to the heart's signals."

So, my Master's teaching was, "Yes, we need the brain. We need the intellectual processes, of course, but learn to regulate them with the heart, through the heart, by the heart."

So this understanding of understanding, that we have to know with the brain but understand with the heart, it was the first important lesson that he taught me. Of course, in the beginning it was a bit difficult for me to accept, but by good fortune I landed up studying a bit of psychology. I think I was introduced to it by some friend who suggested a little reading of Jung and Freud. And I had studied a little bit of biology in school. And it was not difficult to accept, because we see with the eye, but it is something else which really makes the picture tangible, understandable. It was for me. I am not suggesting that it is for all.

Similarly, I have been used to this fact, that if you see a person smiling, depending on our mood or our reaction to that person, we interpret the smile differently. So, what we see and what we understand of what we see, are very often, and generally, two different things. And it was not difficult for me to make out that it was the heart which is creating this, shall we say, intermediary level of interpretation. So, eventually I had to accept this idea of the heart being the vital medium of understanding, and therefore of human relationships, even at the most mundane levels, most physical levels.

Because my Master told me, he actually showed me some people who were around us, he said, "Wait, and watch when I say something, how many different reactions you find here." Even though I had noticed this all my life, it was like something we have heard in the Christian tradition, you know, "You have eyes, but you see not." Because we do not understand why there are so many reactions. It is very common that sometimes you bring a present, and it creates a totally different situation from what we expected or anticipated. We say the same thing, and ten people understand it in ten different ways. People who come prepared to accept, accept anything that a man says. And some people who will not accept anything, will never accept anything.

So, this was the thing that I learned from my Master, you see, that a thing may be true, it may be right, but not necessarily be accepted by everybody that you are speaking to. And he gave the example of the seed and the soil, that the perfect seed may yet not germinate, if the soil is not right. And we have the example in the Bible, the parable of the sower, where a man goes and sows the seeds, and he is shattered to find only a few come up. And today we have a whole science of soil chemistry, soil physics, I do not know, soil anatomy, perhaps, will come later. That is for agriculture. And in animal husbandry, you have the whole science of cross breeding — genetics. So the whole thing is, you see, that you have the seed and you have the soil, and they must both be willing to co-operate with each other. And therefore my Master said, "If I give a seed thought, and the person in whom I put it is not prepared to receive it, the soil is not ready. He will not have any benefit whatsoever."

And that was the next stage of his teaching, that the soil is the heart, not the head. Because, even when we understand with our intellect that something is right, the heart may not accept it. So he said, "It is useless to appeal to the intellect. Always appeal to the heart, even in teaching." And that is what we call, simply, co-operation. We all know this. We are all working in different fields. Whether you are a manager, or the owner of your firm, or just a worker in the factory, we all need co-operation. The owner needs co-operation from the managers. The manager requires co-operation from the workers and the staff. And it does not stop there. People generally think it only comes from above to below. But you will remember, you know, I have worked in a factory from the lowest level to the highest level, and I found sometimes, very good workers, if they did not have the co-operation of their supervisors, they failed. So co-operation is not a one way street, it is a mutual interaction between the people concerned. And especially in the field of education, if the teacher cannot establish that rapport with the students, the whole exercise fails.

So that is why, you see, we have to build up a system founded upon mutual understanding. Understanding with the heart of each person. And my Master used to say, this is not any criticism but it was his finding, that the ordinary clinical psychological techniques do not have very much impact, not because they are not correct, or not valid, but because they do not go to the core of the problem. It is the same thing in counseling. If the counseling is at a superficial level, it fails.

And everyone who is involved with counseling in the human relationships knows this fact, that unless you can touch the heart of the people whom you are counseling, make them open up, you achieve nothing.

So, that was the most important lesson of my life, and all this is just a background, you see, to my eventual adventure in spiritual life. Because, without this understanding, I could have not proceeded further with my Master. Always there is a fascination with the intellectual, the systems of intellectual understanding and knowledge. And then we have a simple way that says, "Just listen with the heart. See with the heart. Speak with the heart." It becomes a little difficult because it is one of the human tendencies to value the complex more than the simple. That is why you find, perhaps it is a parallel to the evolutionary stream itself, that evolution proceeds from the simple to the complex. But we do not take a lesson from that also, that at one stage, when the complexity becomes too much, the system collapses.

So, the complexity of a system must be useful to that system. It must be of service to that system. But when we build more and more complexity, out of a fascination for complexity, we lose control over that system. For instance, only yesterday I heard that in Munich they are building a new airport, and the main intention is to divert much of the traffic that goes to Frankfurt. But they are already facing this problem, that the latest equipment which they have put in is already outdated. And now they have to decide whether to throw it out and build a new one, which is not an easy decision to make, because by the time they get today's new equipment, tomorrow's new equipment is coming. So, you will end up with a situation where we are pulling out the old one and starting the new one without ever using anything, because by the time we start using, the latest equipment has come.

I read a small story once about such technological development in a future society, where the man installs a telephone, and the first message he gets on the telephone is from the telephone company to tell him a new model has already come into the market. The first program he sees on the television set which he has newly installed is an advertisement for the next model, which has already come by the time his set has made its start.

Now, this is not a laughing matter, because we are facing, today, a situation in our technological lives, technologically oriented lives, similar problems to those which we have found in the Greek myths, Hindu myths, that to climb up three steps, fall back four steps, climb up three steps, fall back. It is going on eternally. It is just a suggestion that technological advance, when it outstrips human need and satisfies only the intellectual craving of human beings, more and more complexity being misunderstood for more and more wisdom, then we will inevitably face that situation ourselves.

So there again comes the need for simplicity. Should technology serve human beings or should human beings serve technology? My Master said, "If you understand with the heart and use the intellectual function only as an instrument, as a tool, then it cannot run away with us." Otherwise, it is like a man riding a horse which he cannot control.

So, this is why we come now to the question of yogic evolution, and put this understanding in proper perspective. Because in yoga also, we find similar streams of knowledge. You have gyana yoga, which deals with knowledge, with the intellect. We have the karma yoga, which deals with action and the field of action. There are so many other yogas, but these are the main ones: karma yoga, gyana yoga, hatha yoga, bhakti yoga — the way of devotion.

Now it is a fascinating thing to find, especially when we read the literature of India, that karma yoga and gyana yoga have always been attractive to people, because one involves doing something, achieving something, the other involves learning and knowing and the idea of, you know, knowing everything ultimately. And generally the idea of bhakti yoga was not well received, because it is a way of devotion and devotion was mistaken for emotion. Because normally in certain bhakti paths, you have these ecstatic states being produced where people dance and weep and shed tears. And in certain sophisticated societies these things are not welcome. They are considered to be exhibitionistic, not desirable, somewhat childish and not useful. Perhaps it is dependent on what we understand by bhakti.

And I had also shared in this common misunderstanding of my, shall we say, repugnance for the bhakti path, because in India it is too common to find so-called bhakti yogis who do nothing but weep or laugh without control. And many people, who have been educated, have found it very disagreeable to be in their presence. Not because they found the weeping and the laughter by themselves repugnant, but because of the idea that the person has lost control over the situation. And how could a yogi not have control? It seems to be something of a contradiction.

But my Master was able to give me a right understanding of what bhakti really means. It is a mixture, not exactly a mixture, but a co-operation of two different streams. Love and what we should call the craving or aspiration for elevation to the level of the Master or God. I think in English you can say it is something like a worshipful attitude, or an attitude of adoration. And therefore the heart is very much involved in bhakti. And my Master said, "When people intellectualize love, which mistake even yogis make, and they think they love but they do not really love, then this sort of aberrational activity is possible."

Now we have this difficulty to understand how a man can, or a woman can, think of love. But I may, very humbly, suggest that that is the phenomenon of modern life, that all human beings want love, and to be loved, and to love. But love, I think, by and large eludes us, because more often it remains at the mental or emotional levels and does not really come out of the heart, does not touch the heart, does not find its seat in the heart. And my Master's definition of the absolute love was that, "The lover should not even know he or she loves." Because as long as we know there is love, it is again a subject matter of knowledge, not so much of feeling. And at the highest level the identity between the lover and the beloved should dissolve. And when that does not happen what is love?

And yet at yet higher levels, at spiritually elevated levels, love cannot be personalized any more. It is no longer that one can say, "I love you," to an individual, or even to a group of people, but a person is transformed into love itself. Such a person no longer loves in the usual sense, but he becomes love. And my Master said, "God is love in that sense." He does not love Jack or Robin or Lucy, but He is love. And if you have the ability, and the willingness, and the yearning to be in His presence, then you will feel that He loves.

So therefore, you see, the whole thing of bhakti yoga became transformed. And I was able to understand one of these great mystifications of thought, which in the West we are often asked, "If God is love, why is there so much misery, so much violence, so much criminality, so much of everything: disease, warfare?" My Master's answer was, "Because they are not in the presence of God."

So when we remove ourselves away from His presence, and go further and further, it becomes impossible to feel that love. And then we hear these desolate cries, "Oh, God does not love me." And that is a mistake, you see, because we sort of humanize God into somebody who loves and who is loved. And falling into that mistake, we make our lives miserable. It is like a man who does not put honey into his mouth saying, "It is not sweet, it is not sweet." Honey has its quality. I must be willing to taste it. And if I am well, I am healthy, I get the real taste of honey. If I am sick, it is possible not to have that taste though it is honey.

Like we have colour blindness. What is red to everybody, somebody sees as green. Now red is always red. And when you come to the science of colours, you will find that nowadays there are so many distinctive colours within one colour. It is no longer possible to identify colours by name, but they are given certain numbers, I think based on the wavelength or something like that.

So from the simple understanding, you see, that to know honey, I must taste honey, I must be with honey, and to have the real taste I must be healthy, I came to the greater understanding, that for a yogic relationship with the Maker, you see, with the Creator, we have to be in the presence of that which we want to learn or understand. And we must be clean, absolutely clean, to receive that. Otherwise it is like looking at something with coloured glasses on, and we can only see what this glass shows us, not reality which is beyond.

Therefore, in the system of yoga that my Master taught us, called Sahaj Marg, the cleaning of the heart of all its tendencies is a very important aspect of our daily practice. And it is the heart which gives the answers. And we have that small thing which is called the conscience, you see, the voice of the conscience, which, by being ignored life after life, hardly exists. In fact, I thing it exists like one of these small tiny flames, pilot flame, you find in a big water heater. But the major thing is not burning. So my Master said, "Go to the heart, clean the heart, purify the heart. And simultaneously go nearer and nearer the presence of that which you want to understand, which you want to know, which you want to become. And without that nothing is possible."

Now if we are afraid of God, God realisation cannot possibly be there. I mean, even in simple human terms, if you love somebody and you are afraid of that person, how can love exist? Love must remove fear. Again in the Christian tradition it is said, "Perfect love casteth out fear." Love and fear cannot exist side by side, cannot exist simultaneously. And in any relationship, when we say we love but we are also afraid, it only means that the love is either not there or not strong enough.

And to what extent must this fearlessness extend? Well, to the extent that we are not afraid to lose our life for it. And where you are looking for big things, enormously great achievements, we cannot be satisfied with anything except that highest sacrifice. But do not be afraid, because in love there is no sacrifice. The idea of sacrifice must be ever present in our hearts. And then when you are in that mental attitude, mental atmosphere, we find that all our life has been nothing but a sacrifice. But we do not think of it as sacrifice, because we do it for somebody we love. Therefore, I believe that even the idea of sacrifice can exist only when there is no love. And where there is love, no sacrifice can be too big.

So this was my Master's next teaching that, "If you want to go towards the goal, love it first." You must love it so much that you cannot possibly exist without it. You must be restless for that. And therefore, in all these yogic systems, you find the example of two lovers separated, and they are throbbing with this restlessness to be together. That restlessness often becomes so great that the lover is able to do anything that is necessary to be with his beloved. And you have all heard of the stories where a house is burning, and the mother runs in to bring her child out. What makes that bravery, that courage, possible? Only love. If the love is not there, who cares for that child? And this love has to be so much enlarged, so much universalized, that eventually there is a sort of a resonance between your heart and the big heart that we call God. And it is not that a human being can ever be God, it is not possible, but we can be divinised, so that anything that happens there is resonated in our own hearts. And this is how the great saints are supposed to have received their divine knowledge, divine wisdom, divine guidance, divine instructions.

My Master was very amused when he found people could not understand this. He said, "All communication is a vibration. When I speak and you hear me, you are only translating the vibrations in the air, with the aid of your ear, into sound again and hearing it as sounds." And every school student studying physics has made this experiment, that when you cover a bell with a jar, you hear the sound. But when you vacuumize that jar, even though the bell is ringing, you do not hear the sound because the medium of communication is gone. If it is a telephone, it is a similar vibration. When you see, it is a similar vibration.

So my Master often asked people who came to him, especially educated intellectuals, "If you can understand and accept these forms of communication, which are all based on vibration and nothing but vibration, why do you find it difficult to accept that you can receive divine knowledge and guidance similarly by some subtle vibration, which you cannot measure?" And he said, "It is because we limit our understanding of knowledge through these senses. We are only willing to accept what we can see, what we can hear, what we can smell, what we can touch and taste, as something we know." And therefore it has been very difficult for most people to accept that there are extra-sensory ways of perceiving, of knowing, until fortunately science came into the picture, and wanted to study ESP, as you call it. According to my Master, this was the biggest blockage that we create in ourselves, that we accept what science says and do not accept what science has not yet said, forgetting conveniently that science is saying today what the saints and seers have said hundreds of years ago. Because had it not been so, telephones would not be possible, television would not be possible.

So, this is one, rather unfortunate, consequence of the system of education that we all have to suffer from, that the system of intellectually knowing something through the senses has become deified, and we are not willing to accept anything else. So when these people used to ask my Master, "How do we hear this? How do we understand these vibrations which you call divine?", my Master answered, "Why do you ask this question?" They would tell him very patiently, because outwardly he was an uneducated simple village type of man. They would explain as if they were explaining to a child. "I see because I have eyes. I hear because I have ears. But with what can I hear these vibrations?" And he used to say, "The heart." And sometimes he used to give examples of people who could see without eyes. Psychology tells us this is possible, that people just touch and can sense the colour of what they feel. But again, when psychology says this it is knowledge, when a saint says it, it is stupid.

So my Master was always a little sorry for the modern human beings, that because we limit our own understanding of how to understand, we prevent understanding. He said, "All that is necessary is to open your heart, and then see what miracles of understanding it can produce. And if you learn to trust it totally, you will find that you do not need eyes any more, you do not need ears any more. All these sensory instruments, which in any case, are very limited in the quantum of knowledge that they can give you, or convey to you, you do not need them because your dependence on them will go."

And then comes the grand, shall we say, final possibility that the heart becomes the true instrument of knowing, of understanding. And all these sensory instruments become what they are designed to be. They become instruments of the heart. So the whole thing is a reversal of what is happening today. Now we are ignoring the heart and depending on the senses. If a man smiles at me he is my friend. If he frowns at me he is my enemy. But it is possible that he is frowning at some other thought when he is looking at me. It is possible that a girl is thinking of somebody else and smiling at you. These mistakes can happen only when we depend on our eyes and our ears and our nose. When we learn to depend on the heart, such mistakes are absolutely impossible.

And when we come to that stage, I repeat, our dependence on all the senses will go, disappear. Because now we become open to receiving the higher streams of instruction and knowledge, which come straight to the heart. In this way our great seers, the great saints produced their accomplishments. And that is one of the minor benefits of our yogic systems. I must tell you, very emphatically, that that is not the aim of yoga, or the goal of yoga. Because that again is a means of knowing and understanding for a yet higher purpose, which is to reach a level where we do not need any more any communication, even of thoughts.

It is quite possible some people think this to be a blasphemous statement, but evolution cannot be denied. Can you deny an earthworm the possibility of evolving into a human being? After all that is how we have come into being, if the Western evolutionary sciences are to be believed. We start with the unicellular organisms and we have become this, which we call the pinnacle of evolution. My Master used to say, "Yes, no doubt we are the pinnacle of evolution, but it is a temporary pinnacle. There is much more to be achieved." Otherwise we make the mistake of a man who gets into a train to go to, let us say, Nice and gets off at the first station thinking it is Nice. It may be nice, but it is not Nice. [laughter]

So while we are at the summit of evolution, as it has reached today, if we think we are there forever, and that it is always going to be the pinnacle of evolution, we stop our own evolution. My Master said, "There are two great enemies to our evolution. One is to think we are perfect, and the other is to think there is nothing else that is to be achieved." Even science is full of such mistakes.

There have been great scientists of the past who said, "Well, there is nothing left in science for anybody to discover." In Newton's time he was the greatest. Along comes an Einstein, and he is the greatest. Who is going to come next? Who knows? Because it is like, you know, good, better, best. But then you climb around the other side of the mountain and you say, "This is better than the best." Better becomes better than the best. So, this is not just a play with words, it is a possibility that we have to accept: that if I have come so far, it is only to go farther than this, not to remain stuck at this level thinking, "I have made it. This is the end."

So while appreciating the enormity of the evolutionary stream that has produced us, knowing that the human being is the grandest product of evolution to date, it would be a stupid mistake of that grandest product to think it will always be the grandest, and that there can be nothing grander. It would not be stupid because it is silly intellectually, but because it shows an arrogance which is against evolution. Even at the highest level of evolution, we must have the humility to understand that we are but another step in the evolutionary process. And my Master always emphasized, humility is again found only in the heart, not in the head. And humility is a very essential teacher in the evolutionary practice that we want to have, because the fundamental prerequisite for such a practice is the understanding that however perfect we may be, we have not yet reached **that** level of perfection which is the ultimate perfection.

So, you see, yogic science does not denigrate anything that exists today. There must have been a time when there were only amoebas in the oceans of this world. Perhaps they thought they were the ultimate in perfection. Then slowly you get the multicellular organisms, they must have thought they were perfect. Then life evolved onto the land and it must have thought itself perfect. So my Master said, "Everything is perfect." Not because it is perfect *per se,* in itself, but because the divine stream of evolution evolves not from imperfection to perfection, but from perfection to greater perfection, and to yet greater perfection. It makes life such a wonderful thing. You all know how much we hate to think of Darwin's theory that man has descended from the apes. I do not think many human beings exist who could really accept this idea. It is not that we are monkeys today, but we do not want to have been monkeys in the past.

So you see, yoga, by a true understanding of the nature of evolution, puts that self-respect into a proper frame of reference. I was perfect, whatever I may have been. I am perfect, whatever I may be today, only if I understand that I have yet to reach higher levels of perfection. I was able to understand this nicely with my heart, from that famous speech of Mark Antony in Julius Caesar, Shakespeare's Julius Caesar, where Mark Antony says, "It is not that I love Caesar less, but that I love Rome more." It was a very confusing thing. Because when we think of more and less we think of absolutely more and absolutely less.

But it is surprising that in a society where Einstein has died forty years ago, and because of whom relativity has become a household word, we are yet unwilling to accept the relativity of our concepts: that I can be perfect and yet have to become more perfect, without having been less perfect before. My Master put it very beautifully. He said, "There may be a hundred roses on one rose tree or bush. They are all different, yet every rose is perfect." His ultimate definition was, "What God makes is perfect." Therefore, in nature we find perfection.

Through the eyes of a lover, everything is beautiful. It is said that when a lover walks out into the world he sees everything red as roses and smiling. Does it exist outside or does it exist inside? When we are happy, we see that happiness reflected even in the songs of the birds. We think they are singing. But it is a fact worth questioning whether birds are really singing. Do they know what is music? It is our conditioned interpretation based on the mood of the moment.

So you see, absolute knowledge always evades us because, in this world of conditioned existence, the reality is hidden. Not because somebody is hiding reality with a screen, but because we have learned to condition ourselves and look at the world through our emotions, through our perceptions. Therefore again I repeat the need for purification of the system, very much like you clean the lens of a camera before you take a picture. Otherwise it will be like one of my young friends in India who brought a photograph, and he claimed they were all UFO's, you see, Unidentified Flying Objects. It was dust on the lens.

So you see, to have perfect perception it is not that we are going to know what we are looking at, but that we have to refine our perception. The thing to be known is always what it is. A rose is always a rose. To the lover it is a symbol of love. To the artist it is something worth painting. One who is afraid of thorns, he runs away from it.

So you see, we have to give up this understanding, or this idea of understanding, that we know more and more of the subject which we are studying. It is a very self-defeating idea, because we prevent the possibility of proving it. True knowledge, true understanding, comes by refining ourselves by purificatory processes, nothing wonderful, nothing extraordinary. As simple, I repeat, as cleaning the lens of a camera, or the glass of the lens.

Therefore, in my Master's system, we have this important practice of the cleaning process. And in case we feel guilty about being dirty or unclean, let me tell you my Master said, "There is no need to feel guilty, because again there is nothing which can be called dirt. But when something is there which should not be there, it interferes with our progress and therefore we remove it." Soil and mud and dust on the farms and the fields are essential, otherwise we would not have our rice and wheat that we eat. But when they are on electrical equipment, electronic equipment, glass lenses, they interfere with our interpretation of what we see, and therefore we have to remove them.

I have found, even in my experience, that when we talk of cleaning, people rebel. They say, "Oh, I am not dirty." Now it is not a question of being dirty or clean in the conventional sense. It is the need to remove something which is interfering in my communication, with that which I have to communicate with. I think this is the greatest blessing that my Master conferred on me and other disciples of his, that he made it possible for us to indulge, or involve ourselves, in this cleaning process without feeling dirty.

There is this unfortunate duality, dualism in the mind, that people refuse to learn because they do not want to accept that they are ignorant. If you study the lives of the great scientists, the great discoverers, the great seers, the saints, it is a fascinating fact that it is the educated who wants to learn more. The fool is always content with his foolishness.

So you see, we need education to understand the value of education, and the value of further education. So I repeat, we should not feel culpable, we should not feel that we are in any way lacking. And therefore the Veda uses the very great and very significant example, a symbol, that knowing and understanding are like removing the dust from the surface of a mirror. So in that sense it is wrong to say that we are acquiring knowledge. We are only removing the lack of knowledge that we have from ourselves, by cleaning away the impediments to that right understanding, by referring knowing and understanding back to that in us which is the true source of knowledge and understanding — the heart!

And therefore the system of Sahaj Marg raja yoga works on the heart of the human being. In this system we meditate on the heart. It is the heart that is purified, and in that sense my Master used to say that, "We have to be humanized first." Not because we are some lower forms of life, but because of certain set patterns of behaviour, of understanding, of mutual interaction. We have developed tendencies which are not very human: aggressiveness, selfishness. And if you come to the proper understanding, they are all out of fear. One who loves cannot be aggressive, because there is no fear where there is love. One who is loved cannot be selfish, because he does not want to acquire, he wants to give love. There is no idea of protection. All barriers are broken down. It is as if we live in a houseless house. It has no doors, no windows, no walls, no roof, yet it gives me protection.

It is like that possibility of science fiction, that we are surrounded by energy barriers into which nothing can penetrate. And let me assure you it is not just fiction. It is possible to feel that protection, that love, because when we radiate love nothing can penetrate through it to us. So we meditate on the heart, purify the heart, learn to depend on the heart, allow the voice of the conscience to develop, which is only learning to hear my inner voice rather than all the temptations of the outside world. Seek truth through this [points to the heart] and not through this. [points to the head]

And by this process, it is possible to develop progressively to higher forms of human existence. Not to become some sort of a superman as in the comics, you see, but to become more and more human until we end up as a perfect human being. According to my Master, that is the state of divinisation. Because anything, when it reaches the perfection that is possible to reach, partakes of divinity. That is why in the Vedas we have this famous statement that, "Sugar is sugar because it is sugary." Can sugar be salty for instance? Suppose somebody sold me sugar which is salt in taste. I would not buy it. I would have said, "This is not sugar, for heaven's sake."

So we have to only become that human being of whom it can be said, "He is a human being," or "She is a human being." And the essence of being a human being is to become love. All these transactions of loving and being loved, you see, where there are already two involved, or more than two involved, it is a situation where you are dependent on someone else. And perfect peace, perfect happiness, is impossible where this dependence exists. So my Master used to say, "Do not love. Do not seek to be loved. Try to become love. Because when you become love, everybody will come to you, like bees go to a flower." I have never seen a notice outside a farm saying, "Honey available here." But the bees find it. So when we become love, all of humanity will have to come to us.

The reason, you understand, is not because you are beautiful, or you are good, or you are educated, or you are wise, or you are rich. It is already existing. One goes to another because she is beautiful. She goes to him because he is rich and powerful. This is the existing way of human interaction for love. A Master speaks of the ultimate process, you see, the ultimate state of being, where such a person cannot be even conscious that they are coming to him. And he used to say, "It is like a flower. The flower is not conscious that the bees are coming and sitting on it, and taking away its honey. It exists. It is what it is. The rest do what they want with it." But please understand that this is the ultimate state.

That is why there are believers and unbelievers. Whether we have need or not, whether we are priests or atheists, we cannot avoid referring to God in our lives. Even atheists speak of God, even though they are saying, "He does not exist." My Master used to always laugh and said, "There can be no true atheist." Because when they say, "He is not, he is not," they are referring to a He, who must be there to deny His existence. Can you ever say it does not exist, of something which never existed? My Master used to say, "The atheist is the proof of God's existence, because the others only believe in some faint-hearted needy way that He exists, but the atheist affirms his denial in such a very good way that it carries the conviction of His presence."

This is the possibility that we find in yoga, not of becoming powerful or rich, because the older ways which did not go through the heart promised powers, enormous powers, which you could even use to shake a planet out of orbit, for instance. They can promise riches. They can promise achievement in this world. But the way of the heart is not the way of getting. It is a way of becoming from what we are, perfect as we may be, to what we have to become — the ultimate perfection.

So, in conclusion, I can say in one sentence that the way of the heart is the way of becoming. We invite you to participate in this adventure, understanding fully that there is nothing to get, nothing to give, nothing to achieve — but to become. Thank you.

II

USA

CLEVELAND
ROCK-N-ROLL

13

Charity Begins at Home

West Point, Georgia
September 14, 1988

I thought of calling it just a diary but then people who mistake it for a new diary will want to buy one with clean pages. And when they find something printed on it they could very well reject it. So this struggle went on, you know, and one day during meditation the phrase 'In His Footsteps' flashed before me, and I fell in love with the title, because it was both a title for a book, and a diary, whatever it is. And in some way I took it as a message to me, you see, from the self within me, his supreme Self, my Master, that, "It is not enough to write a diary about your spiritual work with me, under my guidance, with Lalaji's blessings, but you have, in a very real way, to follow in my footsteps." So you see the title is not merely suggestive of what one has to do. I think it is an imperative, it is almost an order, "Follow in my footsteps."

Christ is supposed to have said, "Take up thy bed and walk." It was an order, and when he obeyed, it became possible even though he was stricken with the palsy, as they say in the language of those days. He was able to get up and walk with him. So this was the secret of my Master's gifts. They were very real gifts, that whenever he gave an instruction and we had the courage and the fortitude and the determination and, most of all, the love to follow him, the ability was given to us with the instruction, or the order, or the request. That was the great secret of Babuji's way of working. I specifically refer to this because normally we want power first and only then we will work. When you tell somebody to work he says, "Oh but I do not know how to do it. I do not have the knowledge. I do not have the power."

In Sahaj Marg the great secret I have learned by personal experience, thanks again to my Master, he made it possible for me to understand these things from within. That the work, the knowledge necessary to do it, the capacity to be able to do it, the power to use, to perform in the fulfilment of that task, it is all one package. You take one, you take all. You take none, you get nothing. If you reject the work, you automatically reject the knowledge, the power, the blessings, the growth, the progress, and everything that goes with it.

Once when I was talking to Babuji, there was another abhyasi with us who had volunteered for service during Basant. He came to Master and said, "Babuji, I am not able to do any sittings. I am on this and this duty, and I am here only for three days. I do not have the benefit of your blessings. What is the use of my coming for Basant?" Just on the spur of the moment, even though he was addressing my Master, I said, "That which you can earn by service you cannot get even by *sadhana*, because we do not have the ability, we do not have the moral fibre, in today's world, to be perfect *sadhaks*. It is not possible."

First of all, we bring with us such a load of samskaras that even to sit and meditate, it requires the blessing of the Master. So many people are here who have written to me, in their reports and their letters, "I do not find the time to meditate. I am unable to do the evening cleaning. I am not able to meditate, sometimes, even once a month."

So you see, it is not a play or a game that somebody decides to meditate, and he or she is able to meditate. Even for **that**, you require His blessings. It is not something that every person can do, even among our abhyasis. I think this problem faces at least eighty percent of all abhyasis, to my personal knowledge. Eighty percent of about twenty-five thousand abhyasis, you can imagine, who cannot be regular, not because they do not want to be, but they are unable to be. Either their spouse is troubling them, or their parents are, or their families, or their children, or their jobs.

Now, whether we should give in to these pressures is a very debatable point. After all, as it is said in the Hindu *dharma*, there is a famous saying in Tamil that, "When a man dies his wife walks up to the gate with the dead body. The son goes up to the funeral pyre and sets light to him. But your *dharma* goes with you to the end." But we are human enough to worry about what the wife will say, or what the husband will say. I think most of these dependencies are self-created. If any abhyasi has the courage and the fortitude, and the determination to pursue his personal spiritual evolution, I may assure you that there is no force on earth, or in heaven for that matter, which can stop it. But if we give more importance to the husbands, and the wives, and the children, and to society, and to parties: "Oh, what will my friends say? After all, she invites me twice a year, and if I do not go, she weeps and she says, 'You are my best friend.'" Okay, where is your best friend going to take you? To the party, no more.

So this is by way of digression, you see, that we lack the mental courage, the mental strength, the determination, to throw off all these shackles. Let me assure you, even the marital bond is a shackle. It is a very harsh statement, you know. And the people hear this and say, "Aha! Look what this man is preaching." But it is a question of your personal spiritual evolution against marriage. If you have a job, suddenly an offer is made on the other coast which will pay you double the number of dollars that you are getting now. Are you not going to listen to your spouse? I mean the Americans are famous for snail-wise lifting of their homes, and walking off at a moment's notice. And I have not known anybody relocate so madly and frantically like in America. Then there is no question of the husband or the wife. "No, no, darling, I am getting, you know, X number of dollars here. I am going to get two and a half *lakhs* there. It does not make sense to refuse." Then there is no consideration of the children and the wife and the husband. The almighty dollar prevails. So, we are working under very, very, shall I say, personalized double standards. Please think over this carefully. I am not attacking family life or social life or any life, but once you have decided that your heart says you must meditate and go to your spiritual destination, to deny that inner call is spiritual suicide.

And if, at that stage, any force on earth or heaven comes to stop you, you have to meet that with fortitude, with courage, again and again. I am using the same words. And remember that all these family ties, relationships, bondages of the flesh, of the mind, they are only for a temporal existence over a certain period of years. I do not know whether the long-lived are luckier than the short-lived. Sometimes I very seriously doubt it. Because, as I once told Babuji when he put me in the central region, I said, "Babuji, I would be grateful if you would terminate my life now on earth." He said, "What a silly request and why?" I said, "Because every day I live there is the possibility of a fall." To rise is very difficult, but to fall is so easy. And every day of an extended life means the opportunities to fall are much more potent, it seems, than the opportunity to rise.

It is like when you climb up a ladder, it is very nice for the first twenty steps. Then you begin to gasp a little, and if you look down you feel giddy. The higher you climb the more dangerous it looks. And the possibility of falling becomes more real. At one stage, you do not know whether to go up further or not. Your muscles become stiff, they start trembling, your courage gives way, your mouth becomes dry. Then, perhaps, you have to call the fire service to bring you down again. So it is not a small thing that you are trying to undertake, you see, it is an enormously big step. A step which was taken by the great rishis of the past, who had to leave everything and go. It is very facile to say, "Babuji has made it so simple, so easy, you see, that I do not have to renounce my family, I do not have to leave my home. A few minutes of prayer in the morning, half an hour meditation, half an hour cleaning. That is all that is necessary."

It is easy to talk like this to your friends, to your parents, to your relations, but you are cheating yourself if you do not do it. If, after Babuji making so much refinement, bringing in so much simplicity, making it so easy to do it, if still we are going to talk of our husbands and wives and jobs, I may make an assertion that God cannot help us. We are doomed! Because, again and again, the cycle is going to repeat. We are going to be born again, perhaps with another husband, perhaps with another wife, children, all over again. The cycle we have repeated, nauseatingly, over and over again. The only thing is that we do not consciously know it. We have had jobs in the millions, we have made dollars in the millions, lost dollars in the millions, had many husbands, many wives, many love affairs.

What is so wonderful about this life, this marriage, this existence, these children and this life? What is so wonderful? By all means get married, but retain the freedom to evolve. By all means have jobs which pay you in golden dollars, double eagles, but retain your freedom to throw it off. Let them not become nice heavy nuggets of gold tied round your feet, which are going to drag you to perdition in the lake of misery. They are nice, dollars are nice, women are nice, bright things in the shops are nice. But don't you fall into that trap. Today may I assure you of one thing: few humans can love. And all this much vaunted love between husband and wife, brother and sister, father and daughter, mother and son, it is a trap!

If anybody here can put his hand on his or her heart and say, "I truly love my spouse," I take my hat off to them. It is a bondage of convenience, of economic convenience, of emotional dependence. So let us not fool ourselves, you see, at least if that real love existed, such as is supposed to have existed between Laila and Majnu, for instance. Even in the life of Rama and Sita you find these tragedies. That great famous *avatar* who was willing to throw away his wife because some stupid fellow on the riverbank, who was washing the clothes, made a stupid remark, "Oh, she was with Ravana for so many years. How can you trust her? How do you know she is of pure character?" And on that single nonsensical assertion by a washer man he sent his wife away, made her undergo the misery of what we call the fire test, you see, and then took her back.

Tragically, he was stupid enough to make her repeat it a second time. Lord Rama who you all worship in temples! I think he was stupid. He made his wife undergo the fire test a second time, and on what basis? Because society talks. So you see, this is from time immemorial, at least in India. I do not know whether you had such a time here to even think about it because, civilization wise, you people are just yesterday's children. You are not yet old enough to call yourselves civilized. Your emergence is barely a couple of centuries old. What is your literature? What is your culture? It is a hodgepodge of European traditions and cultures mixed together in the boiling pot, you know, like some goulash you have made.

I am talking of such culture, thousands of years old, where this tragedy of mutual suspicion, ignorance, corruption, stupidity, subjugation into superstition — all existed. And we are still in the same situation. So, you see, we must be very careful. This and this, which do I want? Can I have both? Well, if the Almighty wishes, perhaps. If, you see. Otherwise it is a time of test, of sacrifice, of choice. If it is necessary, it has to be done. Otherwise, I mean, you are absolutely worthy to pursue your lives, live again and again, hoping that some day, you know, some major disaster, which seems to be always necessary to divert our attention from here to there, comes into our lives and awakens that inner wisdom which says, "Throw these things away. They are mere toys." It is not easy. Either one must be a great saint with enormous wisdom, and an absolute love for God, which brooks no interference from anything else, or there must be such shocks from existence, you see, that out of revulsion for this world, we turn our face away from it.

Now Sahaj Marg offers the easy way. It is *facile*, in the French sense, *tres facile*. It is easy. Not because it is easy to practise, but because all these great tragedies of the past can be avoided. The misery of running away from the house can be avoided if you keep the spouse in the proper place. Yes, we are together in this adventure of life. We live together, we sleep together, we breed for a purpose. It is a family. But my purpose of a spiritual evolution is paramount!

Like, you know, when we are sick, the first duty is to continue to live by curing our sickness. Can your husband possibly tell you, "No, no. Why do you waste money on the doctor?" or, "Why do you eat?" or, "Why do you take this expensive medicine?" If you are working, he wants you to continue to work to earn your share of the dollars, and says, "Get well quickly, damn it. I do not know what is in the fridge, and the children are crying." So you see, the whole relationship is based on absolute personal selfishness.

This, too, is nothing new. The great Upanishads speak of Yagnavalkya and his two wives, and he teaches his senior wife, you know, the spiritual wife. He says, "My dear, do not fool yourself. Do not think that the son is dear to you for the sake of the son. He is dear to you for your sake. Do not think the husband is dear to the wife for his sake. He is dear for her sake." This is wisdom perhaps ten thousand years old, you see. And no less a person than Yagnavalkya said it. Even now, when somebody dies you can hear, "What will I do?" Nobody thinks of the departed soul, where is it wandering, and in which darkness it is stumbling around, what miseries, what horrors of its own mental creation it is facing. Has anybody thought about that? Do you come home and weep for the departed? You come home and weep for yourself.

So what is this sham and shame of an existence in which we pretend to love others, but all that we love is only ourselves? So you see, there comes a time in the affairs of men which, taken at the flood, leads on to fortune. We are in such a time. And the fortune is nothing short of divinisation itself, and it is not just a tide, it is a flood tide. Babuji said with absolute truth and conviction, and made a promise, as it were, that, "If you cannot do it now, such an opportunity may not occur for thousands of years." I sincerely believe this. It is like a ship which, once it has set sail, you have to wait for the next sailing. So, when will be the next sailing? Who knows?

So Americans, Indianized Americans, Americanized Indians, all of you should kindly think over these thoughts. There is something imperative in what I say. I am conveying to you the messages of my Master. What I learned from him, I am putting before you. There is nothing wrong in living nicely, there is absolutely nothing wrong in becoming a millionaire, provided you do not forget your spiritual goal and stop aspiring for it. If you do forget, well you are still millionaires, committing suicide, their daughters running amok, becoming drug addicts, committing suicide. I mean today's society is full of stories of the great people of the world committing suicide, committing atrocities, committing rape, having AIDS. These are the people who make the headlines. We do not want to be featured in such headlines.

So, Sahaj Marg has always said, you see, balanced existence, two wings of the bird. Again, very nice quotations. Whenever people quote these words of my Master they are quoting it in a self-convenient way of wishful thinking. Yes, He has permitted me to do this, and that too. And 'that too', of course, applies to meditation. You know we can live a nice life and continue our meditation. Yes, but we are only emphasizing the next life. The good cars, the happy holidays. What about the meditation? "Oh, but you know, I cannot meditate. My husband says, 'Do not meditate'." Why not? Do you listen to your husband in everything that you do? Why only in meditation do we have to sacrifice our personal interests? Do not women have love affairs? Do they ask their husbands permission to go out with somebody else? Or do men ask their wive's permission to go and sleep with somebody else? Why only for meditation, the wife should interfere?

So you see, I am bringing before you the very absolutely dirty examples of so-called freedom that we enjoy, you see, without conscience, without being troubled about the spouse. But when it comes to a holy thing, a divine thing like meditation, "No, my husband does not like it you know, Chari." So please think over these things. We are going to have ashrams, we are going to have more books. All that is a waste if you are not going to be able to spend half an hour in the morning, fifteen minutes in the evening and fifteen minutes at night. Without that all the rest is a waste. Without life the body, however beautiful it may be, however strong it may be, however desirable it may have been, is a stupid thing of flesh which will soon rot and stink. Remember this!

So do not go after bodies and their adornments, and the money necessary for that adornment to keep that body desirable. Remember, the moment the spirit leaves, even you are afraid of that body. The husband whom you have been hugging and kissing all your life, you would not touch him the moment he's dead. Ditto for the husbands and their wives. Who wants to sleep with a dead body at night? Has anybody the courage? Has anybody the courage? It is not a laughing matter my dear. Nobody would do it. They are afraid, you see, afraid of that very person whom they loved. Now this is a clear proof that you did not love the person who is dead, but that you loved the body which is still lying there, of which you are now afraid.

So you see, we must think, we must ruminate, we must brood over these things. What do I owe to myself? What do I owe to the rest of this creation? That is why we say, "Charity begins at home." Serve yourself first, then you can serve others. Serve only the others, nobody serves you. So please put this up on the wall, women above their kitchen sinks, men above their washing, shaving mirrors. Think over it every morning, and I pray that Master will give you the necessary courage and strength to be dedicated to your personal spiritual evolution. Because as he said again and again, "The opportunity will not exist later." Thank you.

14

The Right Way of Giving

West Point, Georgia
September 18, 1988

Bill just said something about two minutes, that he thought about this for two minutes, and incredibly felt that something was happening. [He chuckles.] I was thinking of the creation of the universe. We are talking of an ashram in Atlanta, Georgia, and I was thinking of the creation of the universe, which according to the Hindu mythologies took no time at all. It was a thought. God thought, "Let it be so," and it was so. Even your scientists, I think, one of those popular scientists, Steven Weinberg, he has written a book called *The First Three Minutes* which deals with the creation of this universe. It seems the first three minutes were the most important. And according to the findings, or perhaps the speculations of the scientists, within the first one thousand billionth of a second, that tremendous explosion, which we call the *kshob* in Sahaj Marg, that tremendous explosion or the 'big bang', from that nothingness, which science calls a singularity, the universe exploded into being. And, as I said, within the first one thousand billionths of a second, it had cooled to something like two hundred million degrees or twenty million degrees when matter could start accumulating, coagulating.

Which only means that science evaluates a thought at something like one thousand billionths of a second, because that is the space or the time that it took according to your scientists, Western scientists. After that, it is nothing. After that, it is only a process. After that, it takes time, because a process takes time. It has to cool from two million degrees to two hundred thousand degrees to two thousand degrees, something like that. And then you have the sun which is hotter, the earth which is cooler, in between interstellar gases still consolidating, more universes forming.

That will go on, you see, very much like a a child is born. You do not plan for days and months and years. You do not think about it. You do not budget for it, and you do not pray. You enjoy, you see. The act of creation is very much a matter of bliss, according to the Vedas. It is spoken of as bliss. *Anandam Brahmeti Vyajanat,* says the Veda. In that moment of bliss conception takes place, and conception does not take time. It is one thing meeting with another thing, and you have the miracle which is called fertilization. After that, again, it is only a process, and that it takes time. The fertilized cell begins to divide, and divide, and divide, and in a few weeks you have something which you can recognize. Then in a few months you have something which you can recognize as a human form. Then in some more months there is delivered to you a neatly wrapped up, or perhaps not so neatly wrapped up, package, which you call 'my baby.' "Oh my wife suffered for nine long months," says the loving husband, and wife says, "Yes, darling it was a terrible time for me." But creation is always like that, you see.

Creation can be fun at the moment of creation. Subsequently it is always a problem. And I mean this literally, you see, not as a joke. The same thing happens when we think of an ashram. To think of an ashram and bring it into being is a fool's game. If a man had a sufficient will, sufficiently strong will, there is no force on earth which can stop it. If God could just think, "Let it be so," and it was, I do not see why my Master could not similarly think and it must be. But the process is painful because, you see, He implanted the seed and He fertilized, shall we say, the cosmic ovum with His own thought.

Then begins this painful process, what we call painful, but which is really a miraculous process of transformation of a single cell into an entity which we call a body with a life in it, which has billions of cells. It is miraculous, you see, and a miracle, perhaps, even in your comprehension. In the human comprehension, it is a painful thing. But how can a miracle be painful? A miracle is a miracle. So, in that process, if you participate with the original joy of creation with which we implanted the seed, then we participate in that miracle and marvel of seeing that seed grow into something again. Otherwise we are like the sower who sows his seed and goes forth, and does not come back again to water that seed. "I have done my job," he thinks!

You see, today, in the day of fragmentation of work, specialization you call it in the West, a man sows a seed, another waters, another sees the sapling, the third one manures, the fourth one cuts off something which should not have been cut off, and there it is dead. Specialization is not a very good thing, not where creativity is concerned, not where creation is concerned. It is like trying to paint a picture. Seven artists participating, one painting the head, one the neck, one the torso, two the arms, two the legs. What sort of monster of creativity would result? I do not know.

So you see, creation has to be the work of one. We cannot partition off that responsibility to others. The process is not one of trouble and pain and frustration. It is one of seeing something grow, which you have planted. If you view it as a problem it is stupid. It is foolish. I do not think any gardener, I mean, real gardener, ever thinks of his garden as a chore or his work as a bore. Of course, after hours of weeding, he may get up with a crick in his neck and something of a pain in his back, but he just stretches and its over, you see, and he says, "Look at my garden." "Is not it a bother, Don?" He said, "Yes, nothing ever worthwhile was created without being taken care of." If you had wanted to avoid it, you should not have planted a garden in the first instance.

So, what the Master has planted, it is our duty, you see, we are under-gardeners, sub-gardeners, garden boys, waterers, what have you, it is our business to nurture. It would be very arrogant to think we have created something. We are participating in a, shall we say, a drama where everyone can think he is a creator, like the children's play yesterday, a magnificent play. Beautifully executed. Where each one could participate with his or her tiny heart, and think that on him or her the whole play depended. See, that sort of participation is what we need, not somebody throwing a hundred dollar bill in the hat and thinking that he has made a big sacrifice, you see, or a thousand dollar bill or a hundred thousand dollar bill. That sort of sacrifice does not create miracles, it creates beggars.

So the idea that we are donating for a Mission and for an ashram is, in my mind, a bad idea. You set yourself apart as a giver to the Mission, which is dependent upon you, and you make your Master into some sort of a beggar, however elevated he may be spiritually, a saintly beggar. If you think that it is your Mission, it is your Master, it is his plant, therefore it is yours, like a child thinks of the father's house as its own, the father's garden as its own. If you think of it in that spirit then there is no sacrifice, there is no giving. You are only watering your own plant. Who should give you credit for it? So you see, this idea of donating something and then priding ourselves on it: "Oh, I gave a hundred thousand dollars." Yes, but who gave you that hundred thousand dollars to give to the Master?

I want to tell you a small story. There was a man in one state, in Assam, who was just setting out to do business. He was a youngster, a mere beginner. Babuji told him, "I will make you into a businessman." And in the course of time, I think seven or eight years later, this man was a millionaire. He had several factories, he had fat bank accounts and, occasionally, he used to give Master some money for the Mission. He must have felt very proud of it that, "Now I am supporting my Master." And then once, he gave a big amount which Babuji refused. He said, "No, no, it is too much for you to give." He said, "No, no, I am well off and can afford this, and perhaps even three times this amount." So he insisted, but in his heart he felt, you see, that without him the Mission could not survive, without him Babuji could not exist, and then the rest is history. That man's business started declining. He went into a loss. I said, "Babuji, did you do it?" He said, "*Toba, toba, toba.*" *Toba* means, you know, "God forbid. I only still wish him the best." But, you know, his attitude towards his Master was such an obnoxious one that nature intervened.

So, you see, we must always remember a child, or a son, going to work for the first time. He earns his salary and comes home. It is the Indian tradition, you see, that he hands over his salary packet to his father. Not with some arrogant attitude, "Dad, look what I have earned. It is your money, keep it." That will only make the father weep. Of course he will accept it because, you know, he does not want to hurt the son's feelings. He may accept it but, in the privacy of his bedroom, he will weep. "Look what a monster I have created. This blighter who has been able to live and exist and educate himself and walk because of me and my love for him, today he throws a packet of dollars at me and says, 'Take it Dad. It is for you.'" See, that is not the sense in which a son gives to a father.

In our tradition in the East, we lay it respectfully at his feet and beg him to accept it as an offering, with the thought, "Something which you made it possible for me to earn, it is yours." Like you have the symbolic offering of the first crop. What was a spring festival in the pagan days, but an offering of the first sheaf that was harvested to Jupiter or Jehovah or Athena, or some such pagan deity? Later on, perhaps, in the church. Later on, perhaps, even to your Master. I have known people coming with their salary packet to the Master and saying, "Babuji, because of your grace, my son has earned this money. It is yours." In a spirit of acceptance he would probably pull out a rupee and hand the rest back and say, "Blessings. May you earn much more."

So, you see, that is the tradition. And the girl of the house, when she had her first baby, she brought it and laid it at the feet of her father. It is the perpetuation of the family line. "Without you, I could not exist. Without me, it could not exist. Therefore, without you, it could not exist." If A equals B and B is equal to C and A is equal to C, without A there is no B, without B there is no C, and C could not exist without A. See, it is the absolute existence.

I have known Babuji refusing once a donation equivalent to six hundred thousand dollars. Partly, I was instrumental in refusing it, but the decision was his, because there was a great deal of arrogance and pride. Six hundred thousand dollars, at any time in the history of man, is a big amount. I mean, [he laughs] you cannot, as they say, sniff at six hundred thousand dollars. But it was refused. So very often, playfully you know, we talk of money, and playfully indulge in these gimmicks and games, selling post cards. One should not think that, by buying a post card for half a dollar or thirty-five cents, one is supporting the Mission.

Otherwise it is like that old story, you see, of a chicken which was wandering around, and an acorn fell on its head and it went around saying, "The sky has fallen." Nor should it think that if the acorn had been balanced on its head, it was supporting heaven with its head. Remember, it takes much more than a few thousand, or a few hundred thousand dollars to build an organization. It takes heart!

Organizations of brick and mortar, any stupid fool can build, and the world is full of them. Good ones, bad ones. Guggenheim museums, marvels of creations by famous architects. But one small tremor of the earth and they are dust and ashes. It does not take much more to destroy man's creation than a small typhoon that they name very gently after ladies. I do not know why. [he laughs] Nevertheless, you see, a small tide, a few feet above normal, and an entire coastal civilization can be wiped out. A river rises a few feet above ordinary and an entire river-based civilization can be wiped out. A little tremor of the earth! But you do not have to go on adding to this possibility of miseries. Asimov has written a book about all the possible disasters that could overtake humanity. It makes interesting reading. But Asimov was only touching upon the fringe of possibilities.

One disaster is enough, you see, to utterly destroy creation. Just one is enough! A single thought could set forth the creation of a universe so vast that we do not know where its limits are today. Nobody knows where the universe ends, because the limit of perception is that object which is moving almost at the velocity of light, beyond which we do not know what is happening. The universe could extend many universes beyond that and we would never know it. We are in an unknown universe, and to call ourselves intellectuals and knowledgeable people who have conquered nature, nothing left for science to know — I mean, how arrogant can scientists get, when we really do not know the extent of the universe in which we are in? We do not know the number of stars in our own galaxy. It is impossible to count.

So you see, if you look out into the vastness and the immensity of the universe, we really feel sometimes, you know, "What am I in this scheme of things?" And then when you realise that even if you are but only a micro-atomic, micro-atomic, micro-atomic, micro atom, nevertheless there is something in you, some purpose for which you have been created, purpose for yourself, for your evolution.

You see, God does not depend on us. Some philosophers have made the mistake of thinking that God evolves as we evolve. The idea of God evolves in us, it changes. God is eternal. Like a son sees his father in different ways as he grows. A daughter sees her mother in different ways as she grows up, and really understands the mother when she becomes a mother. How can God change as I change, or God be dependent on my offerings, a few grains of rice, a couple of grapes, a sheaf of corn laid very tenderly on a sacrificial block, a goat killed, poor living thing, which that same God created? And we return home, self-satisfied, to cook that goat and eat it and praise ourselves. "This I offered to God." You all know the story of Cain and Abel. So many stories.

In every tradition, you have these stories that when man becomes arrogant and prideful, there is a fall. And a God who could create a universe with a thought, why just one universe? He could have created millions. When we do not know one universe, how are we to know where the other universes are, whether or not they exist? And to think we are worshiping

Him, praising Him, gratifying Him, ennobling Him, supporting Him with our votive offerings, as Christianity beautifully says, a penny in the plate [he laughs] — I do not know whether to laugh or not when we believe that that same ultimate Divinity comes before us as our Master. And, with a single thought, He can change us from the beasts we have been to the saints that we are going to be, and the Divinity that is the end of our evolution. And we even think for a moment that we are here to support him, help him with our money.

I do not think in Sahaj Marg we have the concept of sin, but this could be possibly a sin. To think that my Master depends on me, on the few pennies that I donate, on the few bits of stone and mortar that we raise and call ashrams and say, "We are spreading His name." See, that could very possibly be a sin. All that I am saying is to point out what should be our concept of the Master. What is the use of just praising him? He is God, He is the Ultimate, He is Divinity enshrined in the frail human body with the walking stick. And then telling him, "Babuji, I have brought a hundred rupees for you, I hope you will have some milk this evening." I mean, how is it possible? So you see, it is very necessary that we understand very properly, very exactly with our hearts, who He is, what He is, what He is doing for us, and what He is doing for us through ourselves.

I have a suspicion that whenever he makes us donate something — the word donation I do not like but I use it because that is the word we understand normally — he does it to lighten our burdens. He says, "Take off this load. Give it to me, let me handle it." As he has said so beautifully in one of his paragraphs, I think in *Reality at Dawn*, when you travel by train in India some nervous passengers carry their baggage on their heads, he says, "All right! Till you reach the train you carry it on your head but when you enter the train why do you still carry it on your head. Why do you not put it down?" So, he lightens our burden of, I do not know, possessiveness, acquisitiveness, avarice, guilt perhaps, because the money most of us earn may not be untainted. So we purify it by giving it to him. It is no longer mine. You do with it what you like. That is one way.

The second way: there is a beautiful tradition in the *Ramayana*. The story of Rama when he went to find his wife who had been stolen from him. He reaches the shores of what is now Tamil Nadu in India and he has to cross over to Lanka. It used to be called Lanka. Then it became Ceylon. Subsequently, now it is back to Lanka. He has to build a bridge across the sea by filling with soil, because there were no engineers, no civil engineers. They had to dig mud and rock and throw it into the sea and sort of build, what you call it, a causeway across the ocean. And it is said that the squirrels helped him by bringing small mouthfuls of sand. And for their performance, he stroked one with his fingers in appreciation of their love. And those three finger marks are still there today. And they did not do it saying, "Rama look how I am helping you. Without my aid you could not build this causeway."

I think our contribution to our Master's work is perhaps of the same proportion as the squirrels' contribution to Rama's work, Lord Rama's work. What ennobled their work was that they did it with love for the Lord, not out of a sense of helping him. Who are we to help the Lord? But they did it out of a sense of participation, like children participate in the work. When you want to go to the kitchen, they want to go to the kitchen. You start doing something, they want to do it. They want to bring a glass of water or a fork and a spoon. Out of love, you see, participation out of love.

So, if, in that spirit, as lovers of the Ultimate, lovers of God, lovers of the Master, we participate, giving our all, whatever it may be, even if it is only the sweat of our brows, okay, it is enough. Who wanted anything more from you? You are all familiar with the story in the Bible of the golden calf. And when Moses went up to the mountain he was holy and all the people were rejoicing. He had brought them out of Egypt. When he came down, he found again Baal and Baalam established, you see, and he was annoyed. In that short space of time that he went up the mountain, got hold of the tablets with the Ten Commandments and comes down, there was corruption.

So you see, this idea that, "I am helping my Master," we should completely remove from our minds. Masters — they exist in an eternity of which we can have no knowledge. They exist in a dimension where money does not play any part. I mean, He who can think a universe into existence could hardly be troubled for the lack of a few thousand dollars or a few million dollars or for the wealth of this world. If he allows us to participate it is out of his magnanimity, his love for us, to make us participate, so that, by participating, we become welded into one, we become his family by participation. Unfortunately we cannot be his family by birth. A master cannot have six billion children, for instance. But he makes us his children by making us love him as a father, by loving us as his children. And then he wants us to participate in this divine adventure as his children, you see, not as helpers, not supporters, not as donors.

I know with how much pain sometimes he would receive money, and then just give it away to somebody else. He had to sometimes take because he could not refuse. You do not know how difficult it is not to take. People think it is very difficult to give. But to receive is much more difficult. Because when you receive there is an implicit, what shall I say, a bond created in the receiver, something which he has to perforce, you know, return in some way. He feels obligated. When it is with love there is no obligation. When your son gives you a rose, you do not give him back a bottle of wine. He is your son. He brings a rose and you say to your son, "Put it in this vase. It is your rose, it is my rose, it is our rose." But if he grows up into, you know, six foot two, and comes back after six years in the United States of America, earning a lot of money, let us say, and says, "Hey Dad, take this," and, you know, throws it like that... I have seen sons doing it, it becomes a very painful thing. It may even be of gold.

So you see, the value of the thing is not in the value of the thing itself, but in the way in which it is given. Therefore I often tell people, do not give until you know how to give. Do not give until you know what to give. And do not give until you know when to give. When a wife is dying, what is the use of giving her a diamond? When she was well and she had her birthday you did not even think of it. You were in Frankfurt and used your credit card to telephone her long distance. And when she is dying, you bring her a diamond. What is the use? She would have said, "Darling, I would have been much happier had you just given me a word of love at this instant when my soul is leaving my body."

So when to give, what to give, how to give, I mean, these are secrets of nature. It is very difficult to receive. It is easy to give. It is very difficult to receive. That is why you find in mythological stories, or as my Master used to give, he used to give without the act of giving even coming to our knowledge. Why transmission? You know all the old traditions involved touching of hands, muttering of mantras. There was a process which was visible and which had to be recognized, and which made the receiver feel an obligation, a debt to the giver. Here there is nothing, you sit, and often we find our people saying, "I did not feel anything. What did he do for me?" "I do not know. Maybe he did something."

So you see, to give without giving, without destroying the self-respect of the one to whom it is given, without destroying your own self-respect — because when you give to a great man and you think you have given him something, and obliged him with something, that you have done a great deed, you are demeaning yourself. We become beggars. So the right way of giving, you see, is not to give but to participate. It is my house which my father is building. This is a brick I have, and I put it here. Another son comes and says, "Dad, you know I am a carpenter, I have this bit of wood saved up. How about putting it in that window?" He says, "Son, yes, that is going to be your bedroom, it is fitting that it should be there." So, we are building for ourselves, not for him. And if anyone thinks that he is building for the Mission and for the Master and his name shall shine forever, it is crazy.

So I would like to suggest, you see, that to those who cannot give without feeling that they are giving, do not give. Because in giving in that way you commit an iniquity upon yourself. You burden yourself with the idea of giving to someone who is really giving to you. And that is a burden which we should not be asked to bear, which we cannot bear. But if you give, not as if you are giving to someone else but to yourself, with the thought, "This is my house, my father, and I have a right to build it along with you. You are planning it. I am building it. What I have, I give you. What you have, you put into it. My brothers are all there. It is our house. It is but right we should all participate in it." And whose brick is which? Who knows? The man who has built half the house may not exist tomorrow morning. And the man who has paid nothing may live in it forever.

So, can we determine what we should give by the usage that we are going to make use of that? "No, no, you know, I am here for three days and why should I make a donation to this Mission." Who asked you to make a donation? It is a misunderstanding to think that there is ever a demand for money in this Mission. There is not! Of course, sometimes I am guilty, because I joke with people and sell postcards and things like that. But it is a bit of fun. It is like the father selling to his son, or the father giving a loan to make the son money-conscious. Because if you give it, the son sometimes becomes intemperate, does not learn how to handle money. You say, "Look, this thousand dollars is a loan. You have to repay it to me with interest." It is a joke between them. No father, I think, ever demands the money back from his son. All that he wants to do is to teach him a lesson.

So when our father teaches us and gives us the *Ten Maxims*, and imposes his, shall we say, 'ridiculous propositions' as we consider them, it is to make us grow. To make us grow into citizens of a spiritual empire, where we can stand face to face with our creator and look him straight in the eyes and say, "Well, now there is no difference between you and me. Though you made me, I contributed something to the process too." If the father asks, "What was your contribution?" You can say, "Well, I co-operated with you. I obeyed you."

So you see, this is the secret of **becoming** in the spiritual world. That unless we co-operate, unless we obey, absolutely, wholeheartedly, totally, we cannot reach that goal for which the Master is slaving for us. We may have so many hundreds of thousands of minor stages on the way, which are yet bewitching, astonishingly higher than this world, because, you know, it is like flying. Even if you fly a hundred feet above the ground, you have that exhilaration of being in an element which is higher than the one to which you have been used. You are elevated. But here the goal is of totality, you see, total transformation. Not some wayside station where you may have good shops, good coffee, and where you can live in bliss because nobody is asking you to pay.

If you want to reach that total transformation without surrender, as it is called, you see, co-operation, obedience put together is surrender, without that surrender, it is not going to be possible. With surrender, it is possible that the next instant the Master may be compelled to say, "I thought you were an abhyasi, I find you are my son." Now he is in the unfortunate predicament of having to say, "You think you are my sons, but you are merely abhyasis." So you see, we have to become children of the Master. Forget this nonsense of abhyasis and preceptors and central region and all these stupid hierarchical notions of power and position. I must see him as he is. That can be done only when I become like him, when I look at him and I see myself reflected in the mirror. And then he sees me and says, "Yes, this I knew I was. Now I see it in you. Therefore I know myself too. My son, thank you for that."

So, this is the divine adventure upon which we should be embarked. You should not be here for lesser goals of passing a weekend, or trying to have a few sittings and then thinking we have got enough for the next year. "It will last, Chari, till you come back," someone told me yesterday. He said, "Well, I am here only for a few hours but I think I have enough to last me till next time we meet, which may be fifteen months hence." So I told him, "I wish I had such meetings with my Master," — where I could meet him for thirty minutes and it would last me for fifteen months. It is a love relationship. Can you meet your lover once in fifteen months, exchange a few tender words and an embrace and say, "Darling, that is enough. We will meet after fifteen months." You see the parody of the spiritual life that people have made of it. The gross misunderstanding, the crass ignorance of what it really means.

Spirituality is not a few sittings, is not a cleaning session, is not even a donation to the mission, however big it may be. It is a total submission and a submergence into his will. So that when we come out of that, when he pulls us out by our hair, you see, out of that river of spirituality, we are no longer what went into it, but we are completely different. So this is the offer the Master makes. This is the purpose of his existence on earth. That is the only goal for which he comes to us. With that intention he creates an organization for us, with that intention he builds ashrams for us. And if you understand all this rightly, you would be setting your foot on the first step of the infinitely long path of spirituality which, though infinitely long, if you have put your foot right then, when you take it off, you are at the destination.

I pray, dear brothers and sisters, that such a consummation may be available to all, but right attitude and co-operation are essential. So, please try to nurture these things. Leave your arrogance, if you have any, at home. Leave your conceptions of time and motion and jobs and money at home. When we come here we are lost. If you are not lost when you come here, the Master is a failure. Thank you.

15

Address to the USA Annual General Meeting

West Point, Georgia
September 24, 1988

President's Address:

19 North Street, Sri Ram Nagar, Madras 18 [he laughs] [laughter, loud and long]

I just wanted to take the pomposity out of the situation. There is an old British item of wisdom which says, "Do serious things as if it is a joke, and treat a joke as if it is a very serious thing." I think it is a very wise bit of advice. And if you all remember Babuji's sayings, he often made jokes but the jokes had meaning. And often he said things which appeared to be very serious but which were really irrelevant. So let us not get into this pomposity of situations, office bearers, directors, all this, you know, blah, blah, blah of corporate organization, and get down to work. Because we spend too much time on discussing organizations when they do not really work.

It is like dissecting a corpse. You know, there is a bit of medical wisdom related to the allopathic system of medicine, that dissection as taught in the medical schools deals with dead bodies, and it is hardly relevant to treating a human being who is alive and kicking, as we say. That is the first fundamental difference between homoeopathy and allopathy. Allopathy deals with dead people. And when we go to the allopath, often it is presumed that we will not return. [he laughs] [laughter] So, in that way perhaps the allopathic system of medicine is very relevant to our society. But we are living, and we do not wish to bury an organization which is still effective.

I just want to mention that, because a growing thing changes. And when we talk of going members and coming members, it is like bidding farewell to a river because the water is flowing in it. "Oh, this water is flowing away. What shall I do?" But if this water did not flow, the next bunch of water would not be able to flow into the river, and it would stink. A stagnant river is a pond. It is no longer a river. So we are a living, I hope moving, growing thing and, inevitably, there is going to be change. And we must welcome change. Change means there is something which we contribute to by our planning process, which is generally a very minuscule part of the total process. The bulk of it is taken care of by nature. And I would like to mention what I just mentioned about a baby. We have absolutely no control over the sex of the baby that we are going to have. Sometimes you do not even know whether you are going to have a baby. Otherwise, you know, you would not have news when a child is born with two heads or four arms and things like that. They are called freaks.

What I am trying to get across is that we should not allow this planning process to obscure the need for activity. You see, very often we plan and plan and plan, and plans get enlarged, plans get refined, plans get honed down to a fine edge. It is like an artist who is perpetually sharpening his tools, and never producing anything. You know people have guns. They spend hours on them, putting a pull through, then an oil rag, then polishing the barrel beautifully, the walnut part of it beautifully, and then putting it in a glass case and locking it up.

But Sahaj Marg is not like that. Sahaj Marg is a living system to be used for our growth. Each one of us must grow. And if, as was suggested when Bill Waycott was discussing the organization, everybody has to play a part, it does not mean a part in doing things. It is like a train, you see, a few people run the train for the bulk of the human beings who use the train. And how do we contribute to the efficiency of the railway system? By using it properly. Keeping the trains clean, keeping the toilets clean, not ripping away the seat covers to make bags with them, as they do in India, not taking away the fans to use at home. So everyone has to participate in these things. Eat the food that is given to you. Do not throw it away. That is another aspect of economy, you see. Economy is not only in giving money but in using money properly, legitimately, wisely, effectively.

I find there is a lot of talk in the Western societies of cost effectiveness. And youngsters from India, you know, get sort of emotionally burdened with this idea of cost effectiveness, not knowing really what they are talking about. It is all right, these financial plans. You know, I have much respect for them because I was a corporate executive myself for thirty-three years and I know what they talk about. They hide a lot of sins and they hide a lot of mischief, they hide a lot of, you know, cutbacks and feedbacks and swaybacks. The bottom line is really the bottom line. They could not get any more bottomer than that.

So let us not be misled by these Americanisms and Europeanisms of financial business, corporate planning, cost effective structures, and all that blah, blah. They generally deal with after-the-fact situations. You know, it is usual to produce a report, financial report, only after the company has wound up generally. You are only talking of the past. What happened last year? Why was this loss incurred? Why was that profit not more?

We want to deal with the future. Please remember, in Sahaj Marg we have a commitment to the future, not to the past, not even to the present. How are we going to proceed tomorrow? Not what we have done yesterday. Yes, it is relevant to the extent that it happened. Well, where are you going? I am going to, I do not know, the cosmic observatory, as he said. [he chuckles] What is at the end of the cosmic observatory? But, you know, the things which have passed generally serve, I mean, in my way of thinking, only to give me a fix. Where was I? Where am I? Where am I going? Am I on course? I do not wish to have, I mean, it is not that I am denigrating the system or our constitution, either of the great American land or the Mission itself, but we should view things in their right perspective.

What is this Mission for? What are we here for? The Mission provides the services that we seek. It is a service organization fundamentally. And if you do not use those services and you have a grandiose Mission and a beautiful farmland and lovely views and sculptured walks, well it is only a tourist centre. I do not think we are building tourist centres.

So, the Mission's purpose will not be fulfilled by just corporate efficiencies being shown, or planning wisdom being exhibited, or even structural, shall we say, genius being shown in the way of construction, cheapening the product, maintaining cost effectiveness. Yes, they are all necessary but they are not the be-all and end-all of this situation. What are we going to do there? That is more important. I find each one voicing his or her personal concern in thinking of plans. It is like the toe saying, "Do not stub me when you walk." You know, suppose your toe had a voice, the big toe of the right foot, "Please do not stub me when you walk." Well, you cannot guarantee it if you are going to walk, and if you are going to walk fast, and if you are going to walk into terrain where you have never walked before. Why the toe? You may even stub the knee. You see, these are parts of a whole which have to serve a purpose, for the purpose of the whole. If my foot takes me around it cannot claim credit for moving me, and saying, "Chari, you have not given me due recognition." Well, I give you due recognition by buying a pair of Reeboks for thirty-five dollars whereas in India I would have bought a pair of *chappals* for eight rupees. That is about all the consideration that I can give my foot. I cannot bathe it in sandal oil and donkey's milk like Cleopatra used to do. The foot is after all the foot.

So you see, let us learn to view things in right perspective. Money? Yes it is important. Is it **all** important? No! Because if you want the ashram, you have it. If you do not want it, we are quite happy in rented places. And if you cannot rent a place, we can always sit in the wide open spaces and meditate. I do not see why not. I remember the old days in India when people had bullock carts and they used to take food for, I do not know, months together with them, the Brahmins especially, who had all the problems of untouchability, cleanliness, this, that and the other. They suffered. Whether any of them went to heaven is a debatable point. You see, I do not believe they did. What is the use? They carried their food. Like I made a reference to the snail, the poor thing carries its house on its back. Imagine, all that! Or the tortoise, you see, the big giant ones in the Easter Islands, I think, weighing tons. You overturn them and they are dead.

So, let us not build weight, but let us build light structures. Light in the sense of spiritual lightness. The body must be light, the spirit must be light, our ashrams must be light in the sense that they must not become burdens on us. What does it mean? Minimum structures! Not something for child care three to ten, another child care eleven to eighteen, another child care eighteen to twenty-five. Perhaps we are all children, you see, on the contention that we are all children. And of course then we will need one geriatric centre for people like me. [laughter] So that is not the way. We have to have, as Babuji said, "Minimum comforts, maximum work on the spiritual side of the enterprise." Then Sahaj Marg is effective. Its ashrams are effective. **We** are effective, in that we have each one evolved to what we have to evolve.

So, while I have great admiration for the Western corporate planning processes, let me also state that I do not have much respect for it. Admiration and respect are two different things. Younger Indians should learn to distinguish between these. We admire people whom we do not respect. I admire Marilyn Monroe very much. But should I respect her? I do not know.

So you see, we have to learn to respect things. From respect comes love, from love comes adoration, and that is how our approach to spirituality must be. Now there is a lot of talk about loving thy neighbour as thyself. Well, I must love myself first before I can obey that famous edict of the Christian religion, you see, "Love thy neighbour as thyself." It would have been nice if that **as thyself** had not been put in. It is a handle, you know. Who loves himself or herself? All this hatred that we are projecting on this world is because we cannot love ourselves. We are only hating ourselves. We feel guilty with ourselves. And when you cannot do that, there is good enough justification to say, "Well, God or Christ or whoever you are, you said it, 'Love thy neighbour as thyself.' I am not able to love myself, how do you expect me to love my neighbour?"

So these conditioned things, conditional things, are not tolerated in Sahaj Marg. **Love.** And in the good old American tradition, **period**. What to love, when to love, where to love? Seek that knowledge in the heart. Should I love my ashram?

— question mark. Love — period. You determine what is to be loved. Should you love your neighbour? Who is your neighbour? The one in Alabama? The state line is not very far from here. Or, because he is out of state, does he not become a neighbour?

So, Sahaj Marg says, **Love** — period. Should it be an ashram, should it be a child, should it be your husband and wife or whatever it is? Master said very nicely, "Refer to the heart." So in all these situations, whether it is a corporate planning thing, whether it is windows and doors, whether it is child care unit, refer to the heart. We seek questions, forget answers. Even our questions are arising only from the intellect and not from the heart. We do not think, we do not feel with our heart why such and such a thing is here. "Why does the sun rise in the East?" somebody asks, you know. Well, I suppose God knew his business.

So, that is the second bit of wisdom. Leave it to the old man up there about whom we talk all the time but upon whom, judging from situations that I see every day, few of us believe in. It is no use talking about somebody in whom we do not believe, somebody for whom we have no respect, somebody whom we cannot love and adore. And all, "Babuji, Babuji, Babuji." What is this talk of Babuji? It becomes another chant, another mantra. All that we need is a string of beads. It hurts me very much, you know, when I hear these empty mouthings. Let us do something and prove our love for him, rather than talk about him and try to prove our love for him. And what is to be done? Remember what he wanted of us is to become what he wanted us to become. All the rest is adventitious stuff to be thrown away, in the good old tradition of the garbage can, including the body. The body is a vehicle, you know. Well, pamper it, pander to it, feed it, clothe it, bathe it, perfume it. Yes, if you have the wherewithal put it in your shower, cans and cans of, I do not know, *Eau de Cologne* or *Chanel No. 5*, but it is not necessary.

So, let us stick to what is essential. Live in an essential way, in the sense that we take in what is essential, we do what is essential, we do the work that is essential, we give what is essential, of us, from us, with us, by us.

I am very proud of all of you, even though I curse you left and right. That is why I take the trouble to speak to you after giving you my formal address. [he chuckles] Because I have seen you working for two days and I estimated, you know, having a mean mind, after thirty-two years of corporate existence I also think in terms of dollars and cents in a very crazy way, you see, but I estimate we have saved nearly $5,000 on labour charges so far. It is not a small amount. If I wanted to collect $5,000 from you it would mean at least fifty individuals of $100 each. But, you see, when you put your heart into it you have contributed $5,000 without knowing even one cent of that work that you have done. This is how true co-operation must come, from the heart. And when you write a cheque it is a material thing written with pen and pencil. Sometimes the pen does not work at the wrong moment, and you stop with two zeros instead of adding the third one. [he chuckles] [laughter] The modern ballpoint pen is very convenient for that. It dries up. But it dries up only when the heart dries up.

So, let us co-operate in the best possible way, in the way in which we spend nothing except ourselves. The modern tradition, the modern way of living, the modern social context, the modern everything, you see, has robbed us of the gift of giving ourselves. It is only through work that you can give yourself. Money is something you have earned, something which you do not value much, which you only value because it gives you a false sense of security, which helps you to enjoy the fun in life. If tomorrow you are sick, God forbid, and you cannot even drink water, what is the millions of dollars worth? That is what I suppose they meant in the Christian tradition, "What shall it profit a man if he shall gain the whole world but lose his own soul?"

So please feel free. Some people have been asking me, "Can we come here for our holidays?" Why not? The ashram is yours. Come! Do some work. If you know something, do it. People who know electricity, electrical engineering, can contribute by doing that. People who can only dig mud, can dig mud and take it where it is necessary. In this way we contribute, and we contribute a lot. There is no question of, "He gave $1000. I am only able to give $20. I feel miserable." This does not arise when we work with our hearts. There is no difference between two hearts. Hearts are always the same. They have the same love, they have the same expressiveness, the way of giving. And the heart gives all, whereas the hand and the purse gives only something. It only gives a fraction of what you want to give, which is only a fraction of what you could have given. So it is generally one hundredth of one hundredth.

So let us think of this as ours, this Mission. Babuji has said, "We must feel three things to be ours: my Master, my Mission, my method." If you feel them to be yours, there is no question of giving and taking because you are giving to yourself. You are working for yourself. You are living there for yourself. You are getting everything yourself. That way it adds to the dignity of the giver, it adds to the prestige of the giver, it makes a heart connection between the two. The idea of giving and taking is lost. The idea of donating and receiving is lost. The idea of I and you is lost. We become one.

The cheque book way, well as I said, it is unfortunately necessary. But even that can be obviated. I dare say we can build this ashram without a cent. If we can put together all the talent that we have in the Mission, bring all the hearts together and we cut our own timber, I mean, everything can be done by us. What is the need for money? That was the way in which the old societies lived when they had no money to deal with. In the pre-money societies, when money did not exist, do you mean to say ashrams were not built, food was not cooked, people did not eat? How did they do it? Let us go back to that wisdom of living in a society dealing with work as if money did not exist. It is possible. We have proved it on two occasions. I guess you will do it once again before we all leave.

So let us try to go back to this ancient wisdom. It is like a tree going down to the roots from where it is drawing its sustenance. Oh, the tree is beautiful on the outside. The leaves are green and the fruit is nice and tempting, pink, juicy peaches, Georgia peaches. Do not forget, if the roots did not exist, the Georgia peaches would not exist.

So this is the ancient wisdom, you know, delve into your roots. And where do our roots lie? Of the individual, in his heart. Of society, in its culture, in its traditions. We are throwing away all these vital things and getting into a hazard with computers and jets and stock exchanges, which are now very conveniently electronicized, if I may use a word, so that you can lose money much faster than you can ever make it. Now, these are corporate gimmicks to take away our money from us, what little we have. And we are mistaking speed for efficiency, figures for results.

I am only cautioning all of you. You are my sisters and my brothers. I have made a commitment to my Master from which there is no possibility of my being, shall we say, released. And that commitment makes me speak to you with all the force that I can muster. Often people can think, you know, that it is a criticism of the way we live, or a criticism of society. Yes, if it has to be criticized, it has to be criticized.

If you go to the doctor and he says, "Well, your lungs are not functioning so well, Charlie. How about giving up smoking?" It is not a criticism, you see, it is a diagnosis. Can you say, "Oh, this doctor is always criticizing me. Whenever I go he tells me something." Well, you go to him because there is something for him to tell about you. Isn't it? When you look in a mirror, you expect to be told the truth. Suppose you put your face before the mirror and the face of Marilyn Monroe was to appear there. I mean, American genius might invent a mirror like that, but it would not tell you the truth. It would not be your face and you could go out walking, as stupid as you look without the benefit of the mirror, because it told you something else. Go to a doctor and he taps you on the chest and puts a stethoscope and says, "Honey, you are perfectly well. Hundred dollars for that diagnosis." And you pay happily and come back and you fall dead. What is the use? He is richer but you are no better.

So when you go to a truth sayer, you know, not a soothsayer. Soothsayers soothed, truth sayers truth you. And when you go to them to be truthed, for heaven's sake go with the strength to bear that truth. It needs inner strength. We evaluate all this with our intellect. "Who the heck is this guy to talk to me like this? Fellow from India, black man, what the heck does he think he is?" You know, all these vulgarisms of the world. But this is how we tend to look at this.

But truth is truth whether we accept it or whether we deny it. It is absolutely impossible to destroy the truth. Because it is truth that upholds. We have this ancient word *dharma*, you know, in the Eastern tradition, in the Hindu tradition, "that which upholds." *Dharma* and truth are synonymous. "*Satyam dharmam jnanam anantam brahma*," says the Veda. And when you throw away all these for a materialistic value, for the false glitter and glamour of a false society, which is just veneer on top of nothing, which is like your Hollywood scene sets, you see, a lot of frontage with nothing behind it... I am ashamed to walk on American streets. Here, right here, you see, the roads are beautiful but you step across the white lines on the boundaries and there is nothing but garbage and filth and bottles, thrown out by people in cars who are wealthy enough to own cars but who do not have this small culture not to throw away a bottle. Is this a culture? Is this a tradition? You walk along here, there is a small creek which is full of old refrigerator parts, old cartons, old couches, old cushions. And yet you have millions of tons of garbage being generated every day. Yesterday I asked Bill why this is allowed. He said, "Well, you have to pay something to shift this, you see, and people do not want to pay." So they find a vacant lot which is screened by ten feet of woodland and throw everything there, conveniently hidden away like cancer.

I am just telling you this again not to criticize but to tell you the state of the union. Your president gives you a state of the union message. Well, as president of this small union, I think it is my privilege to give you a state of the union message. This is the state of the union at the present moment, that we have shining veneers, beautiful veneers, of teak and marble and oak and whatnot, hiding rubbish. And if you say, "Well, that is how the system works," we make the system. And if you are going to be complacent and just go around in Cadillacs ignoring the two sides of the road, well, one day we will be there.

So there is a duty cast upon every individual. You know the political system, the democratic political system, promises a great deal to the individual in his ability to vote an elected government into power. It emphasizes the power of the individual. And when we resile from that power, when we negate that power, when we prefer to be lazy and inactive and not even go to vote we are losing that only power which we have been given under the various constitutions of the world. That is the minimum we can do.

What is the maximum? Well, participate! Like we are inviting you to participate here with the heart. And then you will find you can build a society, you can build a structure which, you see, I do not want to use grandiose terms and say it is going to serve eternity, but it is going to serve **me** eternally. There is nothing which can serve eternally unless it serves **me** eternally. What is eternity to me if I do not exist in that eternity? What is the future to me if I am not here, alive to see it? Isn't it? So when I speak of eternity the only promise I can make, on behalf of my Master who made it to me, is that this eternity lies within you. This cosmic observatory lies inside you. The cosmos that you are going to observe from within yourself is also within yourself. Build that!

So I think that is about the sum and substance of the matter. Look within. Look to the heart. Build your heart. Make it brave, make it strong, make it courageous. Be lions, as Babuji wanted. He said, "One lion is worth more than five hundred sheep." It is not that we do not accept sheep but we accept sheep which are willing to become lions, not sheep which want to stay on as sheep.

So that is the substance of the Sahaj Marg existence. The existence of the system, the existence of the Master, both are there to serve a society which needs to be served in the best possible way. In the only possible way, I may state. Because, again drawing a parallel with modern business, the service industries are praised. What do they do? They come and fix your refrigerator and charge you $150 for something you could have done for $2.50 yourself. Or worse, they do not serve you at all. They just go and say, "Well, it is not possible to fix it. Why don't you buy a new one?"

So this service is the ultimate service, that one who is but a sheep, and perhaps a very poor one at that too, can become the best possible lion, the lion of lions. If you study ancient societies, the lion was a symbol, you see, of monarchy, of greatness. The lions of Babylon, the lions of Greece, the lions under the Nelson column in Trafalgar Square. Wherever you go, where nobility, courage, bravery are to be epitomized, you know, symbolized, it is the lion that is put before you. So let us try to become lions. Let us use this ashram as an arena in which sheep can become lions. An ashram is an arena where without fighting, without quarreling, without jousting, as in the old tradition, we interact in such a way that hearts become stronger, faith becomes evolved, courage evolves out of our inner sheeps' hearts into lions' hearts. And what was but a shepherd's pen has now become the jungle in which lions roam freely. This is what we are setting out to achieve.

The Western society is very good. Use it intelligently. Do not be overpowered by it. Do not think that dollars are the be-all and end-all of existence; that an air-conditioned house with a swimming pool at the back is the epitome of highest civilization. Because, if the man who goes into it is a sinner, the house is not going to make him anything better. He will come out a cleaner sinner physically, you see, not morally.

So that is the concluding thing, you see, that we are here for a moral purpose. Not morality in the lower sense that, "Thou shalt not do this, thou shalt not do that," you know. That is a tiring system of ethics and morality of which humanity has become, I think, justifiably tired. It has not held out any promises while telling you what not to do, which is a negative way of instruction. They have not told you what **to do.** We tell you what to do. **Build!** Build yourself. And Sahaj Marg exists for that. Shri Ram Chandra Mission exists for that. It is open to all. We are at your service. And in this interaction between the Mission and the abhyasi, where the abhyasi feels the Mission is his, lies his salvation, her salvation. So make the Mission yours, the Master yours, the method yours. The three things Babuji said can never be alienated from you under any circumstances. The rest can be yours today and not yours at the next moment.

So this is the, shall we say, glorious adventure upon which we are embarking. And minor things like ashrams should not come between us and our evolution. If they contribute, yes, if not, throw them away. Remember that even the body is a vehicle to be maintained as an efficient vehicle, not as a beautiful vehicle, not as an adorable vehicle, merely as an efficient vehicle to take me from here across the ocean of life to the other side.

I hope and pray that Babuji will bless us in everything that we do. Thank you.

16

Public Talk

Smyrna, Georgia
September 25, 1988

Sister Diana has given you a very direct summary of her spiritual life with the Master. Direct because it came from her heart, not from her intellect. And she mentioned several times about the need to open up the heart and the difficulties in opening up.

Many of us feel it difficult to open our eyes in the morning when we wake up. It is quite a practical problem for many of us who are awake but cannot open their eyes, and so they go back to sleep again. And I think that is why in the Vedas you have that famous statement, "*Utishthatha jagrita,*" two words for one act. Arise, awake! Waking is not arising and arising is not waking. My Master used to say, "Well, there is a third stage. You can awake, you can rise up and still be totally unconscious of what is happening in this world." Because, according to the ancient yogic systems, the yogic truths taught by my ancient forefathers, you see, the rishis, the Vedic seers, the *gyanis* of India, almost all human beings are automatons, robots if you will: walking, eating, sleeping, you know, all the functions of the human existence, but very much like the puppets that dance before us on the stages of a puppeteer. And some mystics have penetrated to this truth when they have said, as for instance Shakespeare says, though perhaps in a different connotation, "All the world is a stage and all the men and women merely actors."

So it has always been a very debatable question that when a human being says, "I am alive," to what extent is that human being alive? So this truth is in the ancient traditions, the Himalayan traditions, both in scope and in origin. Himalayan, because the tradition is so vast, you see, sometimes so unapproachable, so mystical. Sometimes it appears so cold, so forbidding like the mountains, so high up, so remote for those who are in the South and for the aged; out of their scope to climb it up, for those with health problems, dangerous to go and stay there alone, in the caves of the mountains, surrounded by ice and snow, and perhaps dangerous animals. But yet, mountainous in scope, because of that immensity of tradition, culture, knowledge that they embodied.

Even today in India we call a great adventure a Himalayan adventure. People here who have been to India, who are Indians, know that. It is a Himalayan adventure. It is a Himalayan task. But few understand that it is a bringing together of the greatness of the magnificent scope, of the enormity of the problem, the grandeur of the promise that it holds out, the ultimacy of the achievement that is possible, and the divinity that sits atop, it is supposed to be the abode of Shiva. So one who can scale those heights within, you see, not like Tensing Norgay, Hillary and these people scaling up it on the physical mountains, but it is a symbol, you see, that within you lies this possibility, this mountain of opportunity, this mountain on the pinnacle of which sits the Lord Himself. It is the *divya kshetra*, as we call it, you see, the *hridayam*.

Some people were learning the Upanishads on top just now. And in the famous Upanishad, or the part of the Vedas which is called the *purusha sukta*, there is a very direct reference to the heart which is supposed to be like a lotus bloom yet in bud form, with its head pointing down waiting for the touch of the sun to first change its direction from the *adomukhi*, as we call it in Sanskrit, to the *urdhva mukhi*. And then comes this miracle that the bud opens up, transforms itself, receives the light of the sun, and the creation of life is possible. So the symbol of the lotus we find again and again in the Indian traditions: Lakshmi associated with the lotus, knowledge, wealth, power, the thousand-petaled lotus on the top of the head, the *sahasrara chakra*.

So we have some of these ancient mystical symbols all rotating around the heart, you see, the *hridya kamala* it is called, the lotus of the heart. And, if it is just a bud, it is as yet not a flower, you see. The bud must bloom. So this opening up in nature, you find it is possible because there is the *surya*, the sun, which by its effulgence, by its warmth, naturally makes things open to its touch. But the *hridya kamala* of the human being is not so easily touched. That is why when sometimes you hear some things very moving, very much full of emotional content which touches your heart, you say, "I was touched. I was moved."

So without this opening up of the heart, my Masters have taught, nothing is possible, you see, because divinity resides in the heart. I do not want to quote the Sanskrit text here because largely it is a Western audience, Occidental audience, but those of you who wish to find it will find it in the *purusha sukta,* where it is said that in the heart there is a tiny flame. And within that flame resides what we call the *paramatma* — the Ultimate: the ultimate God, the ultimate Godhead, the ultimate Divinity, formless, nameless, attributeless. Having no name, all names are generated from it. Having no form, yet all forms in this universe are generated from it. No power in it, but yet the immense power of the universe comes from it. It parallels a great story, or perhaps the great sage Yagnavalkya drew this parable, which he made for his disciple in the *Brihadaranyaka Upanishad*. In that story, he asks his disciple to take up the fruit of the banyan tree. Then he asks him to cut it open and sees the tiny seed and he opens the seed and he says, "What is there, there is nothing." He says, "From this nothingness, that immense tree has come forth. And from that nothingness, which we call God, this whole universe has been manifested."

So you see, we have to look in the heart for these things. That is why we have in English so many expressions: hearty, heartful, seeking within the heart, approaching with an open heart, having a tender heart, being burdened with a cold heart. The human being is epitomized, described, by the heart, not so much by the other features which we have on our passports: height, weight, color of the hair, color of the eyes. That is a physical description for those who look merely with these eyes.

So we come to this second aspect of the tradition, of the yogic tradition, that there was once a time when people meditated on the point of the nose, the *nasikagre* as they called it, *bhruvor madye*, the point between the eyebrows, perhaps on the point of the navel, when you take the *shat* chakras, the six chakras around the spine. But tradition itself says they got some *vara prasada*, as we call it, some gift from the god to whom they worshiped, which was generally power-oriented, a weapon, an invincible weapon, the ultimate weapon, perhaps. And as my Master once said, "There are weapons in the yogic arsenals before which the atom bomb and the neutron bomb are as nothing." We have the tradition in India that great people meditated for these weapons and ultimately they destroyed themselves with those weapons. Because against divinity, a weapon which divinity itself gives you, or confers upon you, in return for your *tapasya*, as meditation is called, cannot be used. We have this in the life story of Lord Ramachandra when his sons Lava and Kusha, not knowing that he is their divine father, attacked him. And their weapons just go around Lord Rama and fall at his feet. Lord Krishna drove the chariot for Arjuna in the *Mahabharata*. What could happen? Nothing could happen to Lord Krishna. On the contrary he was invincible and his very presence was a protection for Arjuna, who was ultimately victorious.

So yogic tradition says, "Yes, power can be got." The *kundalini shakti*, you know, towards which so many traditions lure people with the lure of power, what is it eventually for? The *kundalini* can do nothing for us. It is a source of power like the battery in my flashlight. It can illuminate me on the path. In my Walkman, it can make me listen to some music. So you see, if you analyze it, it again deals with the senses, the five senses, the field of the senses, the *kshetra* of the thirteenth chapter of the Gita, not with the *kshetragna*.

So the higher yogic approach says, "Beware of power." Ramakrishna Paramahamsa went so far as to say, "Beware of anything connected with power. Even the intellect is a power, intellectual knowledge is a power, and it has its own fascination." And it is easy to be addicted to knowledge as one is addicted to drugs or to alcohol. And his most famous disciple, Swami Vivekananda, has said openly, "The intellect can take you so far and no further. Beyond that point you have to respectfully bid the intellect goodbye."

So you see, we are embarking, or we should be embarking, on a path on which there is no power at all, there is no concept of power, there is no utilisation of power, the goal is not power, even of the power of divinity. And my Master has associated his teaching, drawing upon the ancient wisdom of his Master, Samarth Guru Lalaji Maharaj, that in the human system that which we can call as the source of powerless power, if such a thing can be said to be existing, is the heart.

The forceless force is the heart because we have the sacred ancient wisdom, sacred not secret, sacred ancient wisdom that when you put out a thought, it eventually comes back to you. Everything comes home to roost as they say. Sow a thought, reap an action. Sow an action, reap a habit. You know that English quotation, "Sow a habit, reap a character." So literally we become that which we think.

It is not necessary to think we are that. If a person is thinking, all the time, horrible thoughts, horrible things return to him with his thoughts themselves. It forms a circle around the universe and comes back to the source. Love, similarly, if you let it flow from the heart, comes back to you as love. The only way in which a human being can possibly ever receive love is to love first. Businessmen know that without capital they cannot earn anything. You have to invest something of yourself first before you can get a return. Even if the banks are willing to finance you ninety percent, the ten percent has to be yours. In this situation, the human situation, where we want to be loved, where we need love, where we need affection, unless you love first you cannot receive love. Opening up, what does opening up mean? As my Master used to say, when you open a door it is not merely that you can go out but that others can come in. It is like on a hot summer day, in the evening you open the windows to let in some fresh air, and a host of insects come in. Can you filter out only the air? Openness means openness to everything.

Now we want to be selectively open. I love my friends. I love those whom I will love, or choose to love. How can I possibly love my enemies? How can I love those who should be hated, the criminals, the murderers, the adulterers? Now I can be selective with my intellect, but my love cannot be selective. A river does not flow only through the ashrams of the rishis. It flows through the land which it seeks to water.

The rain does not fall only upon the roofs of the rishis and the saints, it equally wets the roofs of the sinners. Perhaps they need it more.

The recent drought in the United States perhaps will serve to turn the mind of this great land a little from technology to nature back again. Notwithstanding all your fantastic modern technology, high tech, you still need rain which you cannot create. You may be able to create rain in a laboratory or on an experimental farm of ten acres, even. I remember my uncle, my paternal uncle, Chacha as we call him, was a forest officer in India, and his services were deputed to the UNDP. He went to Jordan. And the king of Jordan, King Hussein, gave him a mandate. He said, "I want a forest of one hectare created here, one hectare." My uncle was there for seven years and he raised a garden of Eden, as he used to call it humorously. It cost him two and a half billion American dollars. Nature does not charge for the rain it gives us. So human beings can create a garden of Eden even of one hectare in the desert, but only at a cost which could have probably fed the Jordanians for six months.

So you see, the message of the yogi, the message of the Gita is, "Go back to Nature." The ancient tradition says there are only two things, nature and you, and you are also part of nature. Shiva and Shakti. Without Shiva, Shakti cannot exist. Without Shakti, Shiva is useless. The combination is divine. It has to be divinely used, it has to be used with justice, with mercy.

"There comes the rub," as Hamlet would have said. Who is to decide on what is merciful? We have all faced situations in life when we have to doubt the very justice of God. God has no eyes. God has no sense of mercy. It is a machine. I have heard this phrase used in Western literature, "The mindless machine that is God." And I must salute their native intuitive capacity because, according to the system which we teach, the Sahaj Marg system of raja yoga, God is mindless. And this is the ultimate argument of my Master against the use of power, because when power is used it is always a mindless function.

And justice is something which you exercise. The difficulty in dispensing justice, those of you who have read Shakespeare, well, Portia was the advocate fighting against Shylock, the Jew, who had demanded his pound of flesh. She said, "Yes, give it to him but not a hair's breadth more of flesh shall he take. Not a drop more of blood than that pound shall he take." He was awarded the decree but he could not execute it. "The law allows it, the court awards it." This is the famous sentence from Shakespeare, you see, but Shylock could not cut it out because how can one ever cut exactly one pound of flesh from a living human being? This is the difficulty in dispensing justice.

Who is to decide what is just? In the social systems of all our great nations of this world we have justice departments, we have the legal departments, we have the legislatures which bring into enactment codes of laws. But you find that when they are interpreted in the courts, very often there are loopholes. You try to close those loopholes. You have to enact fresh laws and therefore today we have massive tomes of legal documents, legal books, and we have to depend on what we call precedent. What did the man before me do? What did that judge do in that particular case?

So my Master said, "Avoid this sense of justice." When you go with the heart there is no justice. And what does the heart say? It should, properly speaking, say, "My Lord, I am before you. I stand before you. Do unto me as you will. I do not beg for mercy. I have no request to make. I come before you as a supplicant, one who is willing to receive that which you are willing to give." And my Master used to say, "What can God give but himself," you see, because being that mindless ultimacy, the *para tattva* as we call it in Sanskrit, He does not give power, though He makes power. That is for the lesser deities, the Brahmas, the Vishnus, the Shivas and the umpteen other gods of the Hindu pantheon. And those of you who have the time or the interest in reading the Gita will find that even they have to come to this *karma bhoomi* to evolve again. So my Master said, "What is the use? You are a worshiper of Shiva. What for?" They are functionaries of nature. And the Hindu tradition is very clear on this. Brahma the creator, Vishnu the protector, Shiva the destroyer. All the *angas* or the parts of the one Ultimate, *para tattva*, which is nameless, formless, attributeless. So he said, "If at all you have to worship, worship that which is transcendental to these gods." It is not a question of higher or lower.

In religion we all often have these discussions, arguments, debates, sometimes quarrels. Shiva is better than Vishnu, Vishnu is greater than Brahma. There cannot be greater and lesser in Divinity. A diamond is a diamond. One can be bigger or smaller than the other one. It is not a greater diamond. That it is a cullinan with five hundred and forty-four carats does not make it a better diamond than a one carat diamond, or a ten point diamond. It is after all only a diamond.

We are humans. So how are we to say who is better, who is worse? All that we can say is, "The burden of samskaras I bear, my brother, is heavier than yours." Basically we are the same. You and I, we are brothers and sisters, not because of what we have, but what we are, essentially, in our inner making as the Creator made us. We are human beings. But we parade these differences of caste, of colour, of race, of religion, of sex, create diversifications, create the political economies, social economies, and divide that which God is supposed to have made as one. I do not think God created America and India. He created the world. He created the universe. And in the Christian tradition, when Christ or whoever it is says, "Go forth and multiply," you see, he did not mean multiply in your county, or your state, or your country. He said, "Go forth wherever you will." That is the freedom that is enjoined as a human right, birth right. But unfortunately we have today protective barriers, not only of commerce and business, but of politics too. Parties divide us, elections divide us, religions divide us. It is a well known fact that more people have been killed because of religion than in all the wars that have been fought yet.

So if you look at it with a very rational unbiased view, you will appreciate my Master's teaching that religions have always divided human beings. Spirituality unites precisely because it transcends religion. My Master's great statement I would like to place before you for your consideration: "Where religion ends spirituality begins." Because in spirituality there is no particular god of a particular religion. There is only the ultimate principle, the *para tattva*, nameless, formless. My God and your God cannot be different. It is a tragedy, I mean perhaps the greatest tragedy of the human being is that we all say there can be only one God, and yet claim that my God is not the same as your God. The God of the Buddha is not the God of the Hindu. The God of the Hindu is not the God of the Christian. And these Gods have been made to say, "Only my way is right." I mean the word is put into the mouth of the prophet. "None can reach the father but through me." Perhaps at that time! I am willing to concede that there is a personality for each epoch. And at that particular epoch, he is the way. This tradition we have in Hinduism too, that there was a Rama, the avatar. He had a particular rule. Then Krishna the avatar comes and he is the ruler of the *kali yuga.* But to say that he is the only God, you see, and that there is no other God just because you gave him a name and a form is foolish. A Kapur is a Kapur, a Mehta is a Mehta. One is a Gujarati, one is a Punjabi. But they are human beings. As they say, as they used to say in my father's days, "Scratch them and you find the same blood flowing there." Isn't it? So what is all this, you know, the state of humanity today, that everything divides us? So my Master's great message was: "Come to that which unites."

Religion has been, perhaps, the greatest divisive factor. Money, it only plays upon our selfishness. A day comes when we lose the charm for money. Enjoyment, well when a man becomes old he may have memories of enjoyment. He can no longer physically indulge in enjoyment. It also loses its hold. But religion, it never loses it hold. From the day you are born to the day you are dead and buried, or cremated, as the case may be, it has its unrelenting hold upon you. And if we succumb to that hold we are finished.

You must remember here the great example of Ramakrishna Paramahamsa, you see, who was meditating, who was a temple priest, who used to worship Kali, who attained such a level of *siddhi* as we call it, not of yoga please, but *siddhi*, that Kali had to be present before him as his divine mother, as his sister, as his lover perhaps, I do not know. Until a day came when that great man Totapuri came and said, "What is this you are indulging in? It is an indulgence even to play with gods. You are only substituting a god for a human being. Is this what you are here for, playing with Kali? Go beyond." Ramakrishna had that native wisdom of the earth-bound human being who had no knowledge, who had no education, who had certainly no money. He said "Yes, but how shall I do it?" And tradition says Totapuri struck him on the forehead. "You should meditate on this point, meditate on the Absolute." Then Ramakrishna became the Paramahamsa. Till then he was only a *pujari*, Kali or no Kali.

So having these truths before us, having these traditions before us, having the same tradition — in Christianity, even Christ goes into the temples of the Jews and upsets the money changers' tables, releases the doves caged there for sacrifice. In fact, according to the Jewish tradition, he profanes the temple. Eventually he is crucified for it. What did he say? He said, "My God is in heaven. My kingdom is not of this world. Do not talk of religion here."

You go to Buddha. It is the same story, you see. A prince, happily married, his child just born. He is upset by his walk, shall we say, outside. When he sees an old man struggling to walk, when he sees a dead body being carried on the shoulders of four young fellows, he comes back and says, "What is this? I have been living in a protected environment. I have not known age. I have not known death. I have not known disease." And they say, "That is the truth my lord of the world. That is the truth of human existence."

As the Gita says, as the Upanishads say, "There are four evils that are inherent in the human being, you see, *janma, mrityu, jara, vyadhi*. The first is *janma*. Taking birth is the first evil. Having to die is the second. In between you have old age and disease. How to overcome them? Religion says, "*Mukti*," liberation. Yoga says, "Not enough." You have to reach a stage where you can say, "Between the Absolute and me there is no difference." That is what we call *laya avastha* in yoga, you see, becoming one with the Ultimate. Now there is no more subjection to the cause and effect world, the laws of creation, the laws of destruction, nothing. Because he who creates the laws, the lawmaker of ultimacy, you see, he is me, I am Him. And how to go about this? I come back to the starting point that, you know — power! We can have almost unlimited power.

It is child's play for a yogi. I have seen great yogis performing when I was in school, in Jubbulpore, in Madhya Pradesh. Fellows who could take jars of acid, concentrated nitric acid, sulphuric acid, hydrochloric, and wash their face in it, wash their hands with it and drink a whole beaker full of nitric acid. I brought the acid myself because I was the laboratory assistant in school. I have seen another yogi being put on the scaffold and hung by the neck, but he never died, you see. What would a judge who had to sentence him say? "Hang him by the neck until he is dead." You can hang him for eternity, he would not die, not on that particular scaffold. I have seen another yogi standing on a weighing platform, who was weighing about a hundred and eight pounds, and who, with a few breaths, reduced his weight to eight pounds. And there were engineers, there were mechanics, there was the Avery company's representatives checking at every stage. There was the district collector, the district magistrate. And then he said, "I have been a student of yoga in the Himalayas for the last thirty-two years but I am not able to reduce my weight below these eight pounds. If I could, I would fly. I would walk on water."

When I told the story to my Master he reminded me of Shankacharya's famous story, when a man came to him and said, "I am a *siddha purusha*, you see. I am a man who has achieved." So Shankacharya asks, it was Adi Shankara, you see. He asked, "What have you achieved?" He said, "Master, I can fly like a bird." "How long has it taken you, my son." "I have been practising hatha yoga for forty-two years." He said, "What a lot of time you have wasted. You are going to be reborn as a bird in your next life." You see, these *siddhis* are useless. What is the use of power? As the Upanishad says, "What is it that you can take with you when you leave this body?" Even your own body you cannot take. What are you going to take with you? Take that which cannot be separated from you. Take that which nobody can rob you of. Take that which nobody can snatch away from you, which God Himself cannot separate from you. Make the self the same as His Self. There you are, you see, the whole thing is achieved.

So this tradition of meditation, of the ancient yogic systems of Patanjali and other various rishis whose work he codified — the *ashtanga yoga* as we call it, the eight steps yoga, *yama*, *niyama*, *asana*, *pranayama*, all that, you see — it is very useful but for a limited purpose. *Yama, niyama*, good for character formation, makes you an ethical, a moral person. *Asana*, *pranayama*, good for the physical and the psychic systems, the cardiovascular system in the modern terminology.

I remember once I asked my Master, Babuji Maharaj, "What is the real use of this, *asanas* and *pranayama*?" He said, "I will tell you something which perhaps you have never heard before. Will you believe it?" I said, "Certainly, you know I cannot possibly disbelieve." I did have reservations in my mind. He said, "This system of yoga was created by ancient rishis who had to meditate twenty-four hours a day in their caves up in the Himalayas. They could not go for a walk. They could not go for a swim. They could not practise calisthenics. Therefore they evolved a system of yogic practice, in which seated as they are in meditation, they changed their postures periodically and kept the system revitalized periodically."

And the breathing, *pranayama*? Well, anybody who has meditated knows this is the matter of practical experience, that when you meditate, and you go into deep meditation, the breathing practically stops. So the system needs oxygen, you see. It is a vital necessity. It is called the *prana vayu* in Sanskrit, the life-giving gas. So they develop this *pranayama* to slowly breathe in and out, keep the system replenished with the oxygen. All with only one purpose in mind, that I have to be alive until I reach my destination. No more, you see.

My system does not have to be perfect, it must be effective. My body must be effective until I reach my destination. My mind must be effective until I reach my destination. The whole system has to be kept effective, not superlatively beautiful, not at superlative performance levels like we do with our cars today, leather upholstery, gleaming chromium. Anybody who has read the famous Upanishad which deals with the body as a chariot, the five horses as the *indriyas*, the five pairs of reins as the subtler *indriyas*, the *karma indrya* and the *gyan indriya*, knows the function of a chariot is to take you from here to there, wherever the 'there' may be. The maintenance should be adequate.

In passing I make this remark, because today we have these fads of the body beautiful, the superlatively beautiful, the bleaching of the hair, the reshaping of the nose, what you call plastic surgery, you see, reshaping the figure. What for? It is a vehicle for the soul, you see. And as the vehicle for the soul, it is a temple. Maintain it pure, maintain it clean, maintain it healthy. No more! And, having to do this, the rishis had to evolve the system of yoga, meditation, *dhyana,* supported by the need for physical existence where the body had to be kept revitalized periodically — therefore the *asana*. The oxygen needs of the system maintained at optimum levels, therefore *pranayama*. In the process if they developed any *siddhis*, they warned their disciples. Beware! Beware of *siddhis* because they can lead you astray. You can fall into the clutch of these *siddhis*. Power becomes an obsession, achievement becomes an obsession.

You have the famous story of, I think an *asura* who was meditating on Shiva. He was called Bhasmasura. When ultimately Shiva presented himself before him and said "My son, what is the boon you want?", he said, "Anybody on whose head I lay my hands should be immediately burned to ashes." Now here comes the beauty of the secrets hidden within these stories, you see. Shiva could not refuse that. Therefore my Master used to say, "It is a mindless God, when He cannot see what is good for you, what is bad for you, and He gives it to you." And what did this fellow Bhasmasura do? He tried this power on Shiva's head itself. He ran after Shiva. Shiva had to run. He had to run from the person on whom he had bestowed this power. And the story goes that eventually he reached Vishnu. Vishnu had to put on the form of a most beautiful female called Mohini. She tempted the *asura*. The *asura* did not want to destroy that object with which he wanted to make love. And she made him go through the purificatory rituals, bathing in the river and what you call *sandhyavandana*, you see, in which at one stage you have to put your hand on your own head. And when Bhasmasura did that he destroyed himself. The moral is this, you see, you can get anything you want from these gods by prayer, by worship, but beware of what they give you. Seek Him, but not what is His.

Sometimes people say God is a tempter. He tempts us with these gifts. It is we who feel tempted. I have always felt that temptation is not outside us in any object of temptation. It is within. If I have a samskara which is responsive to a particular thing outside me, I fall a prey to that, and I say it tempted me, whether it be a bottle, or the horse, or cards, or anything. This my Master told me when we were discussing the story of Vishwamitra and his fall. Menaka came, danced before him. My Master said, "Do not be critical of Vishwamitra. There was still latent, this perhaps minuscule automatic form of desire for the female, for the married life, for the connubial bliss. And when she came and danced, even though he was in the deepest meditation he got out of it. The inevitable happened, a daughter, Sahkuntala, was born. And from her that great son Bharata was born after whom the Indian nation is named, Bharatvarsh." So there was a greatness even in that, shall we say, small culpability of Vishwamitra. But he had the guts, he had the temerity, he had the doggedness, he had the perseverance, he had the ability to go over that path again and ultimately he had the supreme satisfaction, as it is said in the tradition, that Vashista himself had to say, "You are a *brahma* rishi." Nothing less than a *brahma* rishi.

There are levels of rishis. To call everybody a rishi is a stupid thing. So the highest level of rishi is the *brahma* rishi. One who has made the *brahma*, the ultimate principle, his own, he worships Him in the heart. And he and He, there is no difference, except the notional difference yet there because this man is still alive in the human form. And there is this, what we say in Hindi, the *parda*, you see, the veil of thisness and thatness which still separates us. And how did they do it? Meditation! How did Valmiki who was a robber, who was a *dacoit*, become the sage who wrote the *Ramayana*, who dictated it to no less a person than Vigneshwara? Again by meditation.

Did the mantra matter? This is a very important point to notice, you see, because *tantric* traditions speak of the need to have the sacred mantra. When he was told to pronounce the word Rama, the sacred name of Lord Rama, he could not do it. His initiator, the man who initiated him said, "It does not matter. Say mara, mara, mara." And mara, mara, mara becomes Rama, Rama, Rama, eventually. And it is said, his meditation was so deep that the termites built a hill around him. It is called *valmika* in Sanskrit. Therefore he was Valmiki, he who was reborn out of an ant hill and he was a sage. All by meditation!

I remember when we were in Cleveland in 1972, my Master and I, one youngster wanted him to give him a mantra. He said, "Master, will you give me a mantra?" Because this tradition is deeply ingrained. People come and say, "This is sacred mantra. This is secret mantra. You should not reveal it to anybody." Some even charge money for it, two hundred dollars for initiation. My Master said, "If you are serious about a mantra, meditate on your own name. What is your name?" "Mark." "You say, 'Mark, Mark, Mark, Mark, Mark'!" But eventually what is the secret of this? It is the ability to pinpoint your mind. The mantra is nothing but some aid, an instrument, with which you are able to concentrate. *Man trayate iti mantraha.* That is the old secret. That which is able to absorb the mind in itself is a mantra." So my Master said, "Why a mantra? Why a name? When He who is the Ultimate is within you, which is a secret, which is a truth accepted by all religions, that God is in the heart, the source of life is in the heart, the seat of His existence is in the heart, why seek Him elsewhere? Seek within."

Therefore, you see, we call this Sahaj Marg system the way of the heart, because now we have no more truck with the points of the spine, the *mooladhara*, the *swadishthana*, you know. All these things up to the *sahasrara* chakra. There is no use. They are only power points. They can give you *siddhis*. Very good. If that is what you are after, please go ahead. We have no truck with these points because, as my

Master said, "They are again points of psychic energy, psychic wisdom, psychic achievements." I said, "Why, in the Gita, you know, no less a person than Lord Krishna meditates on this point." [brow] "This point," my Master told me, "is the point of power distribution in the system. One who meditates here gets absolute powers." So the final stage comes in the yogic evolution, you see, of my country, India which is yours too, that from the spine to the points on the face, to the tip of the nose, to the point of the chin, to the point between the eyebrows, eventually the yogic system of my Masters, the tradition of Sahaj Marg has come to be seated in the heart. Seek here!

And is there any authority for this? Well, a Master's authority is sufficient. But I was not quite happy with that. I said, "Babuji, is there anything of deeper significance than what your Master told you?" He said, "Yes, the system was known seventy-two generations before Raja Dashrath of the Suryavamsh." A generation is roughly thirty years. So it was two thousand years before Dashrath's time that the system was extant. It was lost. And, if it is today rediscovered, we hope at least the value that it is an antique, you know, which is priceless, will be appreciated by human beings.

My Master always emphasized that this is the simplest way. Sit at home. Do your meditation. There is no form, no name. You do not owe any allegiance to any particular god. There are no rituals where purification is necessary, where purity is essential because you cannot worship God in a temple without being pure. You have to have a bath. You must be clean. And in certain temples there are so many abstinences prescribed. For forty-one days you must not have been near a woman, you must not have eaten this, you must not have done that. They are supposed to be purification rituals. My Master said, "Yes, in a limited way again, you see, like a bath purifies the outside of the body. Can you purify your blood vessels and your spleen and your kidneys by a bath? Can you purify your mind with a bath?" "Oh, I am going to take a hot shower, you know, and purify my mind." Is it possible? So to purify the mind you need a technique which operates on the mind. And unfortunately, or fortunately, if you will, we have to use that same mind to purify itself. Therefore in raja yoga it is at the same time the most simple, the most easy, and yet the most difficult.

And this question Arjuna asks in the Gita of Lord Krishna. Those of you who are familiar with the Gita will know this. He says, "The mind is so mobile, so active, Krishna, how shall I do it? You are talking of so many yogas. You are talking of this and that and the other. You are my good friend. Tell me!" Lord Krishna says, "Raja yoga." And Arjuna says, "How do you expect me to control my own mind?" He says, "By abhyas alone is it possible. Do it again and again and again until you do it." Now this seems to be a big mystery to people who read the Sanskrit, you see, but you learn to drive a car by driving a car. You learn to ride a bicycle by riding a bicycle. You learn to swim by getting into the water. You learn to ride a horse by getting up on the horse. Perhaps you are thrown a few times. So what? You can learn nothing without doing it. Knowledge from books, that is an Occidental tradition. Knowledge through practical experience is the ancient tradition of the East. It is infallible. It is unforgettable, because what you learn by experience, you never forget. What you learn from books, any one of you who has attended examinations know to your dismay, when you stare at the blank answer sheet and the question paper so forbiddingly next to it, memory fails. That is knowledge from books. But can you ever forget the first time you burned your fingers in the fire as a child? Or the taste of something you tasted once in your life, can you ever forget it? So you see, that is the direct knowledge of experience, what we call in Sanskrit, *pratyaksha anumana*, you see, the direct authority of experience transcends knowledge.

And if you ask a rishi or a sage or my Master, a person like him, "What is the proof of your achievement?", you cannot bring God out of his heart and put it and say, "Hey! Have a look. This is the guy who is in my heart. He is called God." Can you bring love out of your heart and show it? "Oh, I love my girlfriend." "Yes, can I see it please?" "Oh, I just brought her a gift." All you can show is a gift, not the love behind it. This difficulty again is shown in the Gita. It is a great treasure house of wonderful wisdom, transcendental wisdom. Krishna says, "When you take something, put love behind it." You see that famous *sloka, "Patram pushpam phalam toyam yomay bhaktaya praychati*, you see. You do not have to bring me expensive gifts. It is not that I am an Elizabeth Taylor and you are a Richard Burton and you are to bring me a four and a half million dollar diamond. A drop of water with devotion, a leaf of a tree with devotion, a fruit, the tiniest flower that you can pick from the grass, bring it with devotion. I will accept it. The Lord of the universe says, what else can you give him. When your child brings you a snail from the garden and says, "Mommy, Mommy, look at this beautiful snail," you may abhor snails, most women do. Nevertheless you say, "Oh, Khala darling, or Mary darling, or Leslie darling, what is this beautiful thing you have brought." And you give the child a kiss. It is the thing behind the gift that is valuable, you see, not the gift itself.

And that now brings you back all over again to the opening of the heart of my sister Diana here. It is easy to give gifts. And generally the value of the gift is in inverse ratio to the love behind it. Generally! We cannot make a general statement like that. There are exceptions. But generally, you know, the more expensive the gift, the less there is of love behind it. I mean this is a speculative bit of psychology, perhaps we feel guilty, we do not love them enough and so we make it up by adding a few more dollars. Had I been Elizabeth Taylor, I would have been very suspicious when Richard Burton brought me that enormous diamond. Why? I mean most women know the secret. When their husbands bring them a costly present they look suspiciously. "What have you done that you are bringing me this expensive gift?"

So God in His ultimate mercy, you see, because can you ever give God something which He can appreciate, He who is the creator of the universe? Can you give Him a diamond? Can you give Him the whole universe and say, "My Lord, take it." He will smile and say, " My son, I created it! What are you giving me? It is mine already." But there is something which you think is yours, foolishly or otherwise. You know the body is not yours because you have seen millions of people dying. You have seen millions of people stricken with disease, leprosy, things like that. You know it is not yours. But you think this thing is yours. My heart, my heart, my sweet heart, give me that. So you see, God is quite a cunning chap. He goes to the root of the matter. He says, "You can give me nothing which is not already mine. If the truth must be spoken, even your heart is already mine. But because you think it is yours, please give it to me." And if we have the foolishness to say, "My Lord, this house is mine, this country is mine, this world is mine," He will say, "Yes, but you know in your heart of hearts that you are going to leave it behind. You know it is not really yours. You are only playing a trick upon yourself. You are fooling yourself. You know all these things. But this heart you are holding onto. Please place it at my feet."

You know, it is a funny thing in India, I have seen this many times, when a dead body is cremated, a human body, you know the funny thing, the bones are gone, the flesh is gone, but the heart is the last to burn. I do not know how many of you have seen this. And in Bengal especially, they do not allow the heart to be burned. When nothing is left but the heart, it is still sizzling in that fire, you know, they wrap it up in a bit of clay and throw it into the Ganges. The heart cannot be destroyed. Even the physical heart is almost indestructible. So you see, the power of that heart, it is just a bit of muscle, not bone, not hard, not flesh, all that is dissolved away by that *Agni*, you see, the fire Lord. It seems as if *Agni* has no power over the heart. If he has no power, what power can he exercise? Brahma, Vishnu, what power can they exercise?

Therefore, you see, it is not without reason that the Lord chooses the heart as his residence. It is that which is almost indestructible. It is that from which circulation starts and ends. It is where all the qualities of the human being are entombed. And when you give it to Him, you are only offering his temple back to him and saying, "Lord, here it is. This is yours, it has always been yours. Foolishly I thought, it is mine. Accept it." That is the first initiation into spirituality. As my Master used to say, "This recognition, you see, that He is already inside, without His presence I could not possible exist, even for a second or a millionth of a second, I accept this or I recognize it. I realise it." Therefore in the transcendental yogic systems it is called realisation. There is no question of achievement. There is no question of power. It is called self-realisation. It is also called God realisation, because the Self is God.

So I have tried to give you a brief survey of our system, and its relevance to the ancient traditions of India. It is no departure from those traditions. People only have to read the Gita carefully and find that it is so. The Upanishad has stated the same thing thousands of years back. All that it is necessary now to do is to try and practise it, and find out the truth of what we speak. Is this achievement possible? Is this development possible? Is this realisation possible? Yes!

So those of you who are here, who have responded to brother Kannan's invitation, are welcome to try it. We have a centre right here in Atlanta, in Marietta. And as he said we shall shortly be having an ashram in this state. It is, I think, one of those divine coincidences, you see, that when we decided upon an ashram in Georgia, we had not even a centre here. And people are mystified sometimes. How does it happen that you have an ashram where there is no centre? When we think, we also realise the unwisdom behind this question. Because nobody sows seed in a place where there are already crops growing. The seed is always sown on fallow land. Education is offered to those who are not yet educated. Health is given to those who are not yet healthy. Death comes to him who is not yet dead. So there is that divine secret, often inexplicable, un-understandable wisdom behind the divine. That here in Georgia — I was myself astounded when they said, "We have found a plot of land in Georgia." I said, "What for? There is nobody there to use that ashram." But the Lord in His wisdom knows. You build a house and people come to live in it. You do not line up the people first and then build a house.

And my Master once said, "What you call an accident is divine plan, and what you call plans are going to be human accidents." Therefore many things that we plan, you know, do not fructify. We have no control over the process. Planning yes, even in the most efficient Fortune One Hundred companies, you will find that the planning process at the achievemental bottom line, as they call it, there is often a very wide difference between the two. Of course you can always bring in justificatory statements when presenting your accounts to the board of directors and to the shareholders. There was a drought and you know, there was a pull out in Korea and this, that and the other, therefore... Whenever you have to say therefore, it is an excuse. Tenable or untenable is not the question. It only means that your achievement is something other than what you had planned it for. This is the human existence, it is the human situation.

When we surrender to the Higher, to the Ultimate, we allow His plan to work for us. And His plan will work whether we accept it or not. When we plan it and we fail, it is only because His plan is different from my plan. When I give up my planning process, His plan is still active, is still potent, is still realisable, and is realised.

So many people are worried about the planning process. "But Chari, you mean to say I cannot run a plane without a flight plan." Nobody said so. That is a mechanical thing. I have to walk to get from here to there. Even God when he comes down as an *avatara* has to suffer the travails of human existence. Rama had to lose his wife, hunt for her in the jungle, fight Ravana. You know all those stories are there. It only shows that even if God should be born as a human being, he cannot escape from the human situation, except that he remembered His divinity. And that is why there is a difference between the Rama *avatar* and the Krishna *avatar*. The Krishna *avatar* is said to be a *poorna avatar*, a complete *avatar*. Even from the moment of his birth he was conscious that he was the Ultimate, the Divine. Whereas Rama was not.

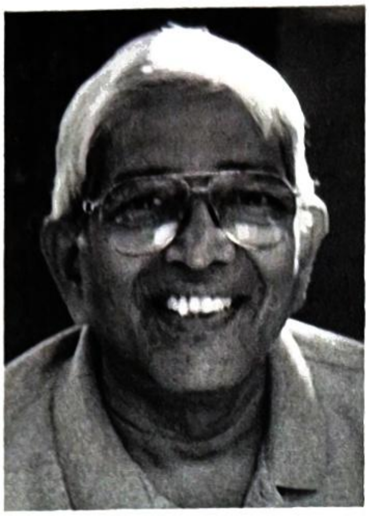
So you see the difficulty, that when a God is embodied in a human form, and he does not know that he is divine, he is subject to all the human laws of cause and effect, birth and death, disease, health. All these *dvandvas* as we call them, the opposites. But if he is conscious of his divinity he just glides through existence, you see, as Krishna did.

So it is not enough to be a human, it is necessary to be conscious. And how is that consciousness going to come unless we meditate and realise that it is so. Therefore you see meditation is the only and sole method of self-realisation. All the rest: powers, *siddhis*, yes, transcendental powers can be yours. But as the yogic masters have said again and again, Ramakrishna has said, Satya Sai Baba of today says the same thing, "Forget miracles. They are not for you. I do it as something to tempt you by, you see, to the divine part. But if you fall for these miracles, you are bound."

So this wisdom, this warning has been repeated again and again. Seek Him alone. And that ultimate piece of wisdom was exhibited perhaps by Arjuna when Lord Krishna came. Lord Krishna was sleeping and Arjuna and Duryodhana went to see him. Krishna pretended to be asleep. Arjuna stood respectfully at his feet. Duryodhana sat on a chair at his head. The Lord opened his eyes, saw Arjuna first then looked at Duryodhana and he said, "I know why you both have come. Ask. But to one I shall give myself, to the other everything I have." And you all know the story. Arjuna said, "My Lord, I want only you." Duryodhana was happy. He said, "This man is a fool. Having had the first choice, he has chosen so foolishly, victory is mine." And what happened at the culmination of that famous Mahabharata war you all know.

So seek Him, not what is His, what He can give. I dare say even in a mundane thing like marriage, if this prevails, the heart easily opens. Seek her and not her beauty, or her prettiness, or her golden hair. When you fall for these things, you find the hair is gone after a few years, the prettiness has disappeared after an attack of some disease, smallpox, perhaps. And then you say, "How did I marry this thing?" So the beloved has become a thing. But if you seek her, you seek her heart, you see, seek the love that is in her waiting to be taken, waiting to be received prayerfully, respectfully, lovingly, then there is no change. Love cannot change. That in which it is held can be changed. You can put milk in a mud pot, but it does not become mud. People from the northern states of India know that. We have tea in *kulhats*, mud pots. Can tea become mud? The same tea you are given in a golden cup, you receive it in a palace, and think you have had something wonderful. This fallacy we all suffer from when we waste money on the so-called five star hotels. "I had lunch in the Sheraton. A hundred and five dollars." You go to a cheap wayside restaurant, you could have it for five dollars, and perhaps better food too.

So you see, we are always being led away by the extraneous, the external, the glitter and the glamorous, forgetting the seed within, the divinity within, which by its very nature cannot have glamour, which cannot be appealing, which cannot be attractive. You have to seek that which has nothing to show for itself. Therefore my Master said, "Look for the nothingness." It is not nothing. But it is something which has the characteristic of nothingness: formless, nameless, attributeless, powerless, knowledgeless. So this ancient tradition takes us back to the way, you see, where we seek the nothingness in the heart and find that eventually when we have realised its presence, it is everything. Thank you.



Heart to Heart, Volume III

" Love has to be so much enlarged, so much universalized, that eventually there is a sort of a resonance between your heart and the big heart that we call God. And it is not that a human being can ever be God, it is not possible, but we can be divinised, so that anything that happens there is resonated in our own hearts. And this is how the great saints are supposed to have received their divine knowledge, divine wisdom, divine guidance, divine instructions." — **P. Rajagopalachari**

The author, P. Rajagopalachari (born in India-1927), was raised in the rich cultural heritage of the East, although educated extensively in the Western tradition. He has traveled widely, meeting interested seekers throughout the world. This volume contains talks given to public audiences as well as to seminars for practicants of the Sahaj Marg system of raja yoga during 1988. The author visited various centres in France and Italy and the state of Georgia, USA where he clarified the teachings of his Master on such topics as samskaras, sensitivity, love and discipline. The talk given at the inauguration of the first European ashram of Shri Ram Chandra Mission in Augerans, France is also included. P. Rajagopalachari is president of Shri Ram Chandra Mission.

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